A

DESCRIPTION

OF THE

WORK of DIVINE GRACE

ON THE

SOULS OF SAVED SINNERS,

IN ITS

ORIGIN, PROGRESS, AND COMPLETION.

IN

TEN FAMILAR DIALOGUES,

Calculated (under Divine Influence)
To awaken Conviction in the Careleſs, to lead the enquiring Mind to a ſound and ſaving KNOWLEDGE of GOD,
And of the Grand Scheme of Redemption by JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

A FEW THOUGHTS ON THE

MILLENNIUM;

OR,

Latter Day's Glory of the True Chriſtian Church.

THE WHOLE COMPRISING

A concise, clear, and ſcriptural View of Genuine Chriſtianity, and pure Religion, experimental, ſentimental, and practical.

By J. LAWRENCE, Briſtol,

Unicuique verò datur declaratio ſpiritûs ad utilitatem—I. *Cor* xii. 6.

Ut perfectus ſit homo Dei, ad omne opus bonum perfectè inſtructus. II. *Tim.* iii. 17.

Ecri en un livre ce que tu vois.—*Rev.* i. 11.

BRISTOL: PRINTED BY BIGGS AND COTTLE:

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear Brethren,

PERMIT me to preſent you with the fruits of my leiſure hours. And let me hope they may be pleaſing and profitable to you. And give me leave to ſay, that the ſtudy of the ſacred Oracles has been my moſt favourite purſuit for ſome years. It is from them I derive my principles and views: I know of no other ſtandard of Orthodoxy, to theſe only I appeal. Sametime, I am far from diſpiſing any help which good and learned men have furniſhed us with, for the better underſtanding of them; yet it is not from men, but from the Divine Spirit that the important light muſt come, which is eſſentially neceſſary to enable us to underſtand the Goſpel, and to believe to the ſaving of the ſoul.

I ſhall make no oſtentatious boaſt, either of the merits of my performance, or of the invitations I have had to publiſh it: nor ſhall I remark on the coldneſs of ſome from whom I might have expected better things. Suffice it to ſay, that I feel conſcious, that it is right for any man to whom his Creator has imparted ſuitable gifts and abilities, to contribute his mite (if it be but a mite) to do what he may to better the mental and moral condition of his fellow men. On this principle I aim to act; and the ſucceſs of it depends on the bleſſing of Him in whom we all live and move. I caſt my performance and myſelf, at my Redeemer's feet, intreating him to uſe it for his own glory, and for the general good: and particularly, for the good of his own diſciples, whom I eſteem as the excellent of the earth, and for whom I have the beſt wiſhes, and the warmeſt affection next to that I owe to my Saviour.

And while I would gladly impart general inſtruction to the ignorant of my fellow men, and lead the enquiring mind to him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: I would alſo wiſh to encourage every good man to whom ſuitable abilities are given; to do whatever he can to ſpread divine knowledge, and to ſhew poor wanderers the way to life and peace.

For this end, let me remind them, there was of old an *Amos* (and others beſide perhaps) among the herdmen at Tekoa,* as well as in the Schools of the Prophets, who were employed by the Almighty to carry his meſſages to their fellow men, to denounce his judgments againſt the wicked, and to teach men the Will of God. And the bleſſed Jeſus took his Apoſtles from among the Fiſhermen of his day, and from the receipt of cuſtom; as well as from the feet of Gamaliel; to ſhew us, that now there is no particular nation, ſociety, or ſet of perſons; to whom an excluſive privilege is granted either to preach or teach, or be the only oſtenſible or viſible Church; to the excluſion of others. But there are ſome of all ſorts of men in every nation, who fear God; and whom the Lord is pleaſed to bleſs with an intereſt in his favor, and to whom he gives gifts and abilities as he pleaſes. And theſe gifts are given not for themſelves alone, but to fit them to do good to others who ſtand in need of it. And the Apoſtle ſays to edify the body of Chriſt *i. e.* his church and people. There is then, no privileged claſs of Prieſthood under the Goſpel, as there was under the Law, for all the Lord's people are Kings and Prieſts unto God. And many of them are bleſt with edifying gifts, in the exerciſe of which many of the followers of Chriſt are taught and benefited, and others convinced and converted. And every *good man* to whom ſuch gifts are imparted, has an abſolute right to exerciſe thoſe talents which God has given him, wherever and whenever he has a call thereto; and more, he has a right to ſeek opportunities to do good. By all this I mean not to encourage *every* ignorant chatterer to attempt preaching who is not

* Amos, i. 1.

not able to ſpeak intelligibly, nor keep his language above contempt: but I ſpeak of thoſe who have edifying talents, and can convey inſtruction in an inſtructive manner. And I am perſuaded, that there are now, as there were of old, ſome of this ſort who never went to an Academy, as well as others who have been there. I would neither run down nor over-value human learning; but would ſay, let every preacher acquire as much as he can, and in my opinion, the more the better. Thoſe who can, may do well to avail themſelves of the helps of religious Seminaries: and perhaps it is very poſſible that others may do as well, who uſe their diligence at their leiſure hours to acquire Languages, &c. and follow their employments alſo. And indeed I think, the mind is more free to examine and compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, and will feel greater freedom in profeſſing what the man believes to be true, when he is conſcious he is under no dictatorial control but the ſcriptures, or that he is not dependant on the good pleaſure of thoſe he is connected with. However, the Lord himſelf chuſes the lot of all his Saints, and no doubt, the lot of all his Miniſters; and *that lot* is a lot of *love*, and the beſt that can be. And if men would learn not to over-rate the Scholar, nor undervalue thoſe of leſs literary attainments, the church would be in a much more proſperous ſtate than at preſent (in my opinion). But the times of reformation will arrive, when whatever is injurious will be removed. This is the Lord's own work, and he will effect it in the moſt proper ſeaſon. A more copious effuſion of the divine Influences is promiſed in Scripture, and it will in due time be granted, then what is wrong will be diſcovered and ſet right; and that which is right in the main will be better attended to; but we are told, *many* ſhall run to and fro, and knowledge ſhall be increaſed; and in conſequence of that, the wiſe ſhall underſtand, though (mean while) none of the wicked (determined infidels) ſhall underſtand.

The following Dialogues are now ſent forth with an humble but fervent deſire to do as much good as

the Lord ſhall be pleaſed to effect by means of them. I have wiſhed to keep the *agreeable* as well as the *uſeful* in view, that I may, if poſſible, attract the notice of all ſorts of men, and tempt them to read. And as example has mightier effects than precepts, I have aimed to ſet examples before my readers, by a ſort of parable. And as this is a way of writing ſanctioned by him who is the true God and Eternal Life, I conceive I need not be aſhamed to adopt it. And while he uſes the parables of the Loſt Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Fig Tree, Vineyard, &c. it is not improper for me, I ſuppoſe, to repreſent my meditations on divine truth by taking a walk, going to the Houſe of God, &c. Our Lord's parables were taken from things exiſting around them to whom he ſpake, and theſe are taken from what actually paſſes among us. I have thought too, that a ſurvey of the divine works in the natural world tended to convey ſpiritual inſtruction; and therefore, I have availed myſelf of it, and I hope, not in vain. But in this mirror, I hope may be ſeen ſomething of that experience which every Chriſtian in the world feels more or leſs of. And alſo, how that divine change which our Lord calls the New Birth is begun on the mind by means of the word, and the Spirit's energy. The conviction and converſion of a Sinner, is ſet forth, and I hope to ſome advantage, ſo that the intelligent reader may by comparing his bent of mind with what is here laid down, come to ſome certainty reſpecting his real ſtate. And the chriſtain ſee his feelings ſet before him ſo plainly, that he need not be doubtful any longer. Therefore, I hope it may be a mean of ſtrengthening to the weak, and of comfort to the doubtful, as well as of quickening to thoſe who may have dwindled and waxed too dull in the ways of God. But I know that all this depends entirely on the divine bleſſing. That bleſſing I would hope for, and intreat at Thy hands, O Thou who haſt the Words of eternal Life. Thou canſt cauſe it to be as a breaſt of conſolation to the babes in thy church; and as a portion of ſuitable nouriſhment to the young men, as well as of ſtrong meat to the fathers,

fathers, grant this, for the honour of thy holy Name, and to Thee ſhall be all the praiſe!

But in the preſent day, when the haters of revealed religion pretend almoſt to deify human reaſon, I thought it but proper to try how far reaſon may be uſeful in religious matters: therefore, I have aimed to be a little philoſophical in the ſurvey of the divine works in creation, and by this method I have gained an opportunity to ſhew (to ſome advantage I hope) wherein reaſon is uſeful and wherein it is inefficient in religious enquiry. And this has opened the way to a clearer diſcovery, that we ſtand in abſolute need of a better guide than human reaſon alone; and alſo of ſome better righteouſneſs than our own to appear in before God with acceptance. In Diagoluges I. and II. this intereſting matter is clearly ſet forth; ſo plainly, that the effects of divine truth on the minds of the enlightened may be clearly diſcerned, and the underſtandings of ſuch enabled to diſcover the work of God to have been really begun on them. And on the other hand, that the ſame divine truths which ſoften and renew the hearts of true Chriſtians; do through the wilful obſtinacy and preverſeneſs of infidels and phariſees, harden them into inveteracy againſt the Goſpel of Chriſt, and the profeſſors of it. Juſt as the ſame ſun ſoftens the wax, and hardens the clay. But the hardening of the clay is not the fault of the ſun, but of its own nature; ſo, the hardening of impenitent ſinners, is not the fault of the Goſpel, or the Author of it: but their own perverſeneſs. To believers, the preaching of evangelic truth is a ſavour of life unto life; but to the rejecters of it, of death unto death; and that juſtly, for their wilful impenitence.

To underſtand and believe the Goſpel, is the greateſt of mercies, and productive of the higheſt felicity. And thoſe who are inſtrumental in bringing their fellow men to this knowledge and faith; are the beſt friends of their fellow men, and themſelves the happieſt of mankind. And the feebleſt of them will ſhine at laſt, in the Kingdom of Heaven, brighter than the ſun, for ever more.

With

With them number'd may I be!
Now and in eternity.

But to remain blind amidſt the blaze of Goſpel Light which we now enjoy; and inveterate againſt the Goſpel; is the moſt dreadful of all curſes: and ſuch will ſink to the deepeſt torments of Hell.

To prevent this, may my readers examine their own hearts by comparing them with the Word of God, and what is here written; and if they have not believed to the ſaving of the Soul, may they now be made ſo happy, as to become immediately the diſciples and followers of the bleſſed Jeſus. I deſire that not not one of my readers may take any thing I have written on truſt, but compare the whole of it with the ſacred Scriptures. To aid them in this work chapter and verſe are referred to at the bottom of the pages. Whatever agrees with the Scriptures is infallibly right, and that which contradicts it is abſolutely wrong: but I deſire to have my book tried by it, for I truſt it will bear a ſcriptural examination. May the author and readers ſtand the teſt of the laſt great day with conſolation and joy, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake. Amen.

Dear Brethren,

I am ſincerely yours,

No. 4, Philadelphia-Street,
April 2d. 1800.

J. LAWRENCE.

CLAVIS.

Evangeliſta, a Chriſtian Preacher.

Civicus, a fellow Citizen with the Saints, and of the Houſhold of God. *Eph.* 2. 19.

Ethicus, a Moraliſt, or Phariſee.

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

WORK of DIVINE GRACE, &c.

DIALOGUE I.

EVANGELISTA *on a Morning's Walk, meets* ETHICUS *and* CIVICUS: *and after ſuitable Expreſſions of civility* and politeneſs mutually paſſed,* EVANGELISTA *began his Obſervations thus:*

EVANGELISTA. This fine wholeſome air, theſe flowers, and the beautiful face of creation in general, awakens in the mind of the ſerious obſerver ſentiments of devout admiration of the wiſdom and goodneſs of that Almighty Being, who formed all things by the Word of his Power.

Ethicus. Sir, you are perfectly right: for by beholding nature at preſent in its variegated and beautiful dreſs, the mind of the virtuous philoſopher feels pleaſing enlargement, and his contemplations on the Creator's works are excited and put in motion, like the wheels of a watch by the force of its chief ſpring. And the imagination becomes aſſiſtant to devout meditation. This raiſes in the mind a thouſand beautiful and ſtriking ideas of divine wiſdom and goodneſs. And by muſing on nature's beauties we are led to contemplate the Creator's glories, and the excellences of Deity break in on our minds, and hereby an important knowledge of God is promoted.

Evan.

* Real Religion does not make Men clumſy and clowniſh, nor ſervile and flattering.

Evan. Dear *Ethicus*, your obſervations are juſt, and it gives me real pleaſure to have met with a perſon of your contemplative turn; and I aſſure you I ſhall be further pleaſed to enjoy your company to the end of an agreeable walk.

Ethicus. Sir, we are perfectly agreed, and I am willing to walk at your leiſure, and to improve the moments as we paſs by ſuitable converſation: but I wiſh you to take the lead in our meditations.

Evan. Permit me to tell you I wiſh you to be our conductor into the delightful fields of meditation at preſent, for I am perſuaded you are capable of leading us forward in a pleaſing and inſtructive manner to contemplate the various works of the great Creator. Therefore, if you pleaſe, we will liſten attentively to your obſervations: and while you are pointing out to us the various wonders of nature, we ſhall be both pleaſed and benefited; and the better prepared to enter on the contemplation of the yet more abundant glories of divine grace.

Civicus. Dear *Ethicus*, oblige me thus far, and proceed to your obiervations *ſans cérémonie**

Ethicus. Gentlemen, I conſent to your wiſhes; and begin by obſerving, that an union of ſouls at an occaſion like the preſent, creates the moſt refined friendſhip; and if I miſtake not, I feel at this moment ſomething of that benign attraction. Therefore, I am pleaſed with the idea that we have met for mutual pleaſure and benefit. I proceed to obſerve,

1. That the being of a God is manifeſted by the works he has made, ‡ for the material worlds (which of themſelves are but dead and motionleſs maſſes) proclaim his infinite power and immence wiſdom, as well as his unbounded goodneſs. They tell us ſilently but powerfully, that the hand which made them is divine; that, the power which ſupports them is Almighty; and that the goodneſs which ſupplies them is infinite. For,

2. If we look to the ſtarry regions, there we ſee luminaries, which in all probability, are worlds of immence

* Without ceremony. ‡ Pſa. xix. 1.—Rom. i. 20.

immence ſize, and inconceivable weight, rolling in fluid æther, ſome placed like our ſun, and others revolving round them as planetary worlds, which in magnitude ſurpaſſes the ſize of this earth many thouſands of degrees: and, admirable to tell, they keep up their conſtant and regular rotation round their reſpective centers. This is known to be the caſe with the planetary globes in the ſolar ſyſtem, and it is highly probable it is ſo with others in higher ſyſtems: and that the ſame regular order which is conſtantly kept up by theſe, is alſo by thoſe, which roll above them. This order did infinite Wiſdom at firſt ordain, and theſe mighty maſſes of ſenſeleſs matter, abide invariably by his fixed laws. Thoſe placed centerally, ſhine with inherent luſtre, but all the planets with borrowed light: the former ſhed day on all thoſe which revolve round them, and the latter derive their luſtre, and emit borrowed light; and when ſhade ſucceeds to ſolar rays, they augment the glory of the ſparkling expanſe which glitters over us. They likewiſe receive light for their own atmoſpheres, and that lumination conſtitutes day. This we ſee in our own world, and it is highly probable it is ſo in numleſs others. But,

3. All thoſe worlds ſtarted into exiſtence at their Creator's firſt call, and the light they emit, whether ſolar or planetary, was produced by Him who is the Father of Lights.* And they continue to roll, and perform their revolutions at his pleaſure; at his frown they would all diſappear. But by their revolutions, he deals out our days, and by the mode of their orbitual motions, he ſends us ſummer and winter in due ſeaſon; and diſtributes cold and heat in due proportions, as well as light and ſhade in proper ſeaſons. This moſt beautiful order and motion is the product of infinite ſkill; and enſtamped on theſe orbs, by that divine Agency which gave being to us all, and in whom we live and move; and to whoſe word, the ſeaſons, the earth, ſeas, and all nature is obedient; all obey *his* ſummons by whoſe almighty Word all things were created. But, 4. The

* James i. 7.

4. The briny deep, and the ſtormy wind, ſhew the wiſdom and power of the great Creator; and manifeſt that he is infinite in wiſdom and almighty in ſtrength. The former, as if it had inſtinctive knowledge, riſes and falls as the Moon looks towards it, or turns her face from it, as if conſcious of the command of the great Creator. And did the men who ride on the Waves, and traverſe the Ocean, but open their eyes, might they not behold the wiſdom and power, as well as the goodneſs of the great Jehovah, manifeſted in their favour? And while they ſtay on the land, and when they ride on the waves, may they not ſee that God has commanded the ſeas to ſerve them; and that his own hand protects them when the latter cauſes the mighty billows to riſe and roar? But in the next place,

5. Who then behold theſe aſtoniſhing works of the Deity without being ſtruck with wonder, aſtoniſhment, and and admiration? Who, I ſay, can fail to diſcover and admire that diſplay of infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs, which the works of the Almighty diſplay unto men? For, wherever we turn our eyes we may clearly ſee it. And what is the ſilent language of all this to man? Do not all things as with one all-powerful voice ſay, Behold thy Creator's Glories oh man?* And learn to know, adore, and praiſe him Learn to know him as the God of power, who made† and preſerves all things.—Learn to know him, as the God of wiſdom, who orders and governs‡ all worlds. Learn to know him, as the God of goodneſs, who feeds all creatures with his bounty. Learn to know him, as the great firſt cauſe of all things, and the preſerver of univerſal nature: as the ever-living and all-producing cauſe of all exiſtence (ſin only excepted) and as the final end of all things. Behold how the eyes of all animated beings look to him § for ſupply; and notice how he gives them their meat in due ſeaſon. Men and beaſts live on his bounty, birds and fiſhes are fed by his munificence; and the ſmalleſt reptile or inſect, live and move in him. Therefore,

* Pſal. cvii. 43. † Rev. iv. 11. ‡ clxv. 13.
§ verſes 9, 15, 16.

6. I perceive clearly, that there is no ſpot however ſmall, nor any globe however great; from whence the divine power is abſent, but his agency and influence is every where preſent;* and his wiſdom and goodneſs is evidently diſcerned by all intelligences. No limits can circumſcribe him, nor any bounds exclude him; he is every where preſent at the ſame moment, to the utmoſt extent of his vaſt dominion. Conſequently, every thing both minute and magnificent is known to him with infinite preciſion; the angelic mind and the human heart, are each and equally known to him. Nor is it poſſible for any thing to eſcape his notice. And from hence I infer, that we owe our preſervation to his protecting care, and are indebted to him for life and every comfort that we enjoy. Therefore, we ſhould love him above all things, and ſerve him with our whole hearts: and live to glorify him in all obedience to his commands.—*Matt.* xxii. 37, 38.

Evan. Dear *Ethicus*, I am pleaſed with your animating ſurvey of the works of the Almighty and the inference drawn from them is highly proper. True indeed, his almighty Arm holds all things in exiſtence, and his general goodneſs ſupplies the wants of every living thing. And it is as true, that one day he will cauſe the world on which we live to ſuffer an univerſal wreck, and at his command to diſappear. Meanwhile, his ſmile imparts life and joy to the chriſtian mind, and at his frown the wicked periſh. Therefore, it is moſt true, that univerſal nature owes its exiſtence to his creating power, and its preſervation to his upholding hand, for Jehovah *as creator, is Lord of all.*‡

Ethicus. Dear *Evan.* I admit the juſtice of your remarks, and freely acknowledge, that I myſelf owe my being to him, for I derived it from him, and I live and move in him, my life and breath are in his hands, I exiſt by his good pleaſure, and I am perſuaded that men and angels are indebted to him for being and preſervation. Therefore I make this acknowledgement to his praiſe.

* Pſalm, cxxxix. 7, 8, 9, 10.
‡ Pſalm, cii. 25.—Heb. i. 10.

Evan. Very properly obſerved my *Ethicus*: and now while we are converſing in this agreeable manner, we may notice alſo, the further diſplays of divine wiſdom and goodneſs in the herbage of the field, the graſs, the flowers and the fruits which grow for man's uſe, the vegetables which the earth produces, and the fruits which grow on ſhrubs and trees, all point us to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God. And in our ſurveys of the creation, and its various glories, order, and beauties: how can we forbear breaking forth in devout exclamation, ſaying, O Lord! how wonderful are thy works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all! Thou art wonderful in counſel and excellent in working! Thy manifold works praiſe thee, and thy ſaints bleſs thee. Bleſs the Lord O my ſoul! Who, I ſay, can help exclaiming thus who poſſeſſes the least ſpark of true ſenſibility?

Ethicus. Dear *Evan.* I think as you do on this important ſubject. And when I recollect, that the ſame ſap, and the ſame earth, within an inch or two, or a very few feet or yards, brings forth food of the moſt delicious nouriſhment, and weeds of the moſt deadly poiſon,* which are alſo nouriſhed and matured by the

* *Ethicus* reminds us here, very pertinently and properly, of a ſtriking diſplay of divine power and wiſdom in this part of the creation. And one would imagine, that his obſervations would at leaſt confound every Athieſt in the world. For what cauſe can be conceived which can produce ſuch effects, but the wiſdom and power of God? It is clear that the Sap of the Earth in its various and diverſified productions ſets forth ſuch evident proofs of an all diſpoſing, all over-ruling, and all producing Power, as none but a Being of infinite wiſdom and omnipotence could effect. It is clear then, that this part of the operations of nature is an indiſputable proof of the being and power of nature's God, and a diſplay of divine wiſdom and goodneſs. And to the pious and contemplative mind it holds forth emblematically,

1. The manifold wiſdom of Deity, and the living proofs of divine power, which produces from the ſame materials moſt nutritious and wholeſome food, and alſo the moſt deſtructive poiſon. But,

2. It is emblematical of what divine Wiſdom does amongſt the race of men. For from the ſame original ſtock, proceeds the divine, the philoſopher, the phyſician, and the clown. The

the ſame ſun and rain: I am ſtruck with aſtoniſhment at the wiſdom and power of God, who makes of the ſame materials things ſo amazingly different in their nature and tendencies. But alas! you know, when we look around us we ſee many inſenſible and thoughtleſs ones, who never obſerve the creator's works, nor praiſe him for his mercies, nor pray to him for his favors. But my *Evan.* I am of opinion, that want of piety is want of ſenſe.

Evan. True, dear *Ethicus*, it is ſo. But to what cauſe will you impute all this criminal inſenſibility and

various intellect among men, (like the ſap of the earth ſprung up on its ſurface) in ſo many different forms of exiſtence, ſets forth both the infinite wiſdom and uncontrolled power and ſovereignty of the great Jehovah, who acts in this part of his works, as the God *of power* and the *Author of life and light.* But,

3. It is alſo emblematical of human depravity. For this, like the ſap of the earth, ſprings up in all natural men in different forms; in ſome it riſes up and bears a dreadful crop of pride and ambition, in others, it produces lechery, of the moſt abominable and beaſtly nature. Others again, wallow in infamous drunkenneſs, and ſink themſelves beneath the level of the brute creation. In others again, the depravity of human nature is manifeſted by the ſordid vice of covetouſneſs, and cruel niggardlineſs. And in ſome, all the black catalogue of infamous vices meet. All theſe ſpring from the ſame ſource, *i. e.* from the original corruption of human nature by *Adam's* tranſgreſſion. And however others among men may be outwardly refined, moralized, and civilized; yet if they have nothing in them but what nature can produce, their ſouls are ſtill in the corruption of nature and far from God. And that wonder-working power which draws from the ſame earth the delicious Cherry Tree, and the poiſonous Hemlock, muſt renew their ſouls by divine influence, or they are loſt for ever. But,

4. God, who makes ſuch a multiform and ſuch an aſtoniſhingly different kind of every ſort of herbs, plants, trees, &c. from the ſame earth, can and does, make like difference in the ſouls of ſinners by divine grace. They are all alike involved in the fall, yet from thence he draws an innumerable company of fallen ſinners, and plants them in his church to make them ſhine variouſly here; and glorioufly hereafter in Heaven. For ſuch wonders divine grace is now performing, and it will continue to do ſo, as long as the ſun and moon ſhall endure.

and impiety which is manifeſt in the conduct of the multitude?

Ethicus. To what cauſe, ſir? Why, to a want, in the firſt place, of a wiſe and virtuous education. Second, to the prevelance of evil example, and. Third, to the cheriſhing bad habits, and the following evil cuſtoms.

Evan. Certainly ſir, I muſt freely acknowledge to you, that each of the cauſes which you have mentioned, operate but too powerfully. The want of a good education is certainly a ſerious evil, and the prevalance of evil example not leſs ſo; and the following bad habits and evil cuſtoms are certainly evils which cannot be ſufficiently lamented. But in my opinion, you have left out the grand cauſe, and ſaid nothing at all about it.

Ethicus. Dear *Evan.* be ſo good then, as to ſay to what cauſe you impute all theſe evils?

Evan. I will readily, and am free to tell you, I impute all theſe evils, and every exiſting evil to the fall of man from original rectitude, and primitive purity; and to the deſperate depravity of human nature by that fall. *This,* ſir, is the *grand* cauſe of all the evil that is in the world: and but for this, man would now have been as pure, holy, and happy as he was at firſt; when he came perfectly bleſſed into this world, and would have remained as free from every calamity as the angels in heaven now are, and as himſelf was when he came from his Maker's hands: and then, there would have been none of theſe evils in exiſtence. This mortifying truth is, you know, abundantly inſiſted on in the Scriptures,* that man is a depraved creature. And now, if you pleaſe, we will enter on the ſubject of human depravity.

Civicus. Agreed, for I wiſh to have ſome acquaintance with this doctrine, for I muſt own it is new to me.

Ethicus. Perfectly agreed, if Mr. *Evangeliſta* undertakes

* Pſalm li. 5.—Jer. xvii. 9.—Eph. ii. 1.—Jer. xvi. 6. Iſa. lix. 7, 8, and many others.

takes to be chief ſpeaker, for I muſt own, I have not ſtudied this ſubject, and therefore, I don't with to go out of my depth.

Evan. Well my dear friends, I conſent to your wiſhes; and I ſhall begin by obſerving, that human depravity is manifeſt in the actions of all, the infant and the youth, as well as in thoſe who are arrived at riper years. All ſhew by their conduct, that they are, what the ſcripture ſays they are, *i. e.* all gone out of the way,† and that there is none that doeth good, *no not one.* The early propenſity to anger and wrath in infants, and their as rapid propenſities to lying and revenge in childhood; the ſtrong inclinations to every vice, which our youth manifeſt, may convince any thinking man that human depravity is an awful truth; a very mortifying reality, which to diſpute would but prove the fact. For, thoſe advanced from youth to riper years, but go on to prove, that the fountain of human nature is corrupt, and from thence the impure ſtreams proceed. Nor is this limited to thoſe who have no religious education, or to thoſe whom bad examples corrupt: for ſome of the beſt of men have had the worſt of children. A good *Jacob* has had a wicked *Eſau*; a good *David* has had a bad *Abſalom*; and many good and excellent men ſince, in every age, as well as in the preſent, whoſe children have had the beſt inſtructions and the beſt examples ſet before them, and yet they have grown up in every vice, and turned out the worſt of characters. My good neighbour *Benevolus*, is a ſtriking proof of what I ſay, he labours with all his might, both in prayer, inſtruction, and example, to bring up the young ones under his care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and in a ſolitary inſtance or two, he has ſucceeded happily. But alas! the majority have grown in vice, as they have grown in years, and dear man, he often laments that he is ſo unſucceſsful; and ſays he fears their very learning will become a curſe to them;

† Pſalm xiv. 3. & li. 3.—Rom. iii. 12 to 18.

them; for it appears to him, the more they know, the worſe they are. This however, is not the effect of learning, but of the baſeneſs of their naughty hearts. However, this proves the depravity of human nature to a demonſtration. And does not the general conduct of all mere natural men manifeſt the ſame thing? Do they not diſcover the ſtrongeſt deſires to gratify every carnal luſt, and every corrupt propenſity? Do not the greateſt number by far, live in a total neglect of God, and in open rebellion againſt him? Do they not live in a courſe of ſwearing, ſabbath-breaking, and blaſphemy? yea, in the conſtant commiſſion of every ſin. Is it not manifeſt to every ſenſible beholder, that this is the lamentable truth? It is evident then, that all fleſh hath corrupted its way, that human depravity univerſally abounds, and that all men *by nature*, are corrupt before God: and that the moſt ſhameful, and moſt abominable vices reign predominant in the lives and conduct of moſt men living. Nor is either childhood or youth any better naturally, and in many, not better practically. Human depravity, therefore, is the diſeaſe of all. For all are ſinners without exception. All have, and all do tranſgreſs the divine law.

Ethicus. But my *Evangeliſta* will have the goodneſs to explain more particularly, what he means by ſin and tranſgreſſion.

Evan. I will. Take notice then, that the divine law is a perfect, pure, and holy rule of eternal juſtice; which enjoins but that which is abſolutely good and holy; as well as every way beneficial to man: to obey therefore, was their happineſs both preſent and to come, to diſobey, their miſery now, and their ruin in future. Therefore, the obedience it required was perſonal, pure, and perpetual; both in thought, word, and deed. Conſequently, an impure deſire* is a breach of it, for *Solomon* ſays, The thought of wickedneſs is ſin: and our Lord intimates the ſame fact relative

* Matt. v. 27.

relative to impure inclinations. Therefore the purity of God's law extends even to the thoughts; and on this account *David* ſays, I hate vain thoughts, but thy law do I love. But the divine law takes cognizance of words alſo, therefore, our Lord ſays, By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified,‡ and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned. The obedience required by the law of God, conſiſts in purity of thought, and holineſs in all converſation; even a ſingle word not agreeable to its injunctions, is a ſin. For ſin is a tranſgreſſion of the law, and an unholy word is a breach of it, an unholy word is conſequently a ſin: and an action, that in any way contradicts it, muſt be a tranſgreſſion. For ſin is a want of full conformity to all its requirments. Now this holy law requires us to love the Lord our God, with all our hearts, and our neighbours as ourſelves. Therefore whatever is inconſiſtent with pure and perfect love to God, whether it be thought, word, or deed, is ſin: and whatever is inconſiſtent with ſelf-love, which we do to our neighbour, whether it be an action, word, or diſpoſition, is alſo a ſin in the ſight of God. For be it remembered, that *Secret anger unjuſt cenſure*, or any degree of lurking revenge, however ſecretly we may cloke it, is viſible in the ſight of God; and his law forbids it, and commands us to love our neighbours as ourſelves.* The obedience, therefore which alone can be acceptable to God, is perfect love to Himſelf, and ſinleſs obedience flowing from this divine principle. And the duty to our neighbour, which God requires us to pay, is the ſame affectionate regard for his perſon and welfare, as we cheriſh for ourſelves, and ſuch as we would wiſh them to entertain for us. And every action† which militates againſt thoſe principles of pure love to God and our neighbour, is a breach of the law; and the ſecret diſpoſition which leads to any word or act inconſiſtent with holy love, is likewiſe tranſgreſſion; and tranſgreſſion is ſin. For, ſays the Apoſtle *John*, Sin is the tranſgreſſion

‡ Matt. xii. 37. * Matt. vii. 12.

† Luke vi. 31.—Matt. xxii. 37 to 40.

greſſion of the law.§ Conſequently, we are each of us convicted by the law, and our own conſciences, as tranſgreſſors and offenders of the Majeſty of Heaven, and guilty of high treaſon againſt the King of Kings, and the God who made us. For from the premiſes we ſee that an impure thought conſtitutes us ſuch in his ſight. But my *Ethicus*, you and I and every man living have not only ſinned in thought, but alſo in word and action, times without number. Therefore the law convicts us as tranſgreſſors and ſinners in the ſight of Jehovah. For it is perfection, abſolute perfection that the divine law requires, and any obedience which comes ſhort of *this*, the law condemns as ſinful. For the ſmalleſt deviation from eternal rectitude is not perfection: and that which in itſelf is perfectly right, can admit of no wrong. Therefore, the holy law of God, can juſtify none but pure and unoffending creatures. From all which it is clear, that no ſinner can be juſtified by the law, for all ſuch are condemned by it; nor can they ever make any atonement for their paſt ſin, or perform any acceptable obedience in future, till renewed by grace and accepted in Chriſt.

Civicus. But my dear *Evangeliſta!* if this account of yours be really founded in fact, what a deplorable ſtate muſt mankind in general be in! really I tremble at their fate, and my own alſo, if this be true. For though I make it a matter of conſtant practice to be obliging and kind to all; yet I feel an interanl conficiouſneſs of many imperfections; and though I really think myſelf as good as any one of my neighbours, as far as I know, yet I am afraid I am not ſo good as I ſhould be. And if what you have advanced be ſtrictly true, I ſee reaſon to fear and tremble alſo.

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, you have no need to queſtion the truth of my obſervations, for they are doctrines of the ſcriptures both of the old and new teſtaments; and rationally deducible from the ſtate and characters of all men on earth. And let me remind my *Civicus* of

§ I. John, iii. 4.

of the Apoſtle's aſſertions. * They are all gone out of the way, they are all together become unprofitable, there is *none* that doeth good, *no not one*. And of *David*, † There are none who ſeeketh after God, but all run aſtray from him. And ſo far from being righteous, that they are impure, corrupt, and abominable. Now, ſays the Apoſtle, we know that what things ſoever the law ſaith, it ſaith to them who are under it, that *every mouth* may be ſtopped, and *all the world become guilty before God*. And this is not all, for the ſame Apoſtle tells the Galatians, that ‡ *Curſed* is *every one* that continueth not in *all things* which are written in the law to do them. And the Apoſtle *James* ſays; Whoſoever ſhall keep the *whole law*, and yet offend in *one point*, he is *guilty of all*. From all which it is evident, that all men are ſinners: yea that they are all by nature dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, totally corrupt and depraved: entirely gone out of the way of original rectitude, and that there is not a ſingle individual of *Adam's* family who doeth good and ſinneth not. In nature then, all men are unholy, impure, and unhappy; and *every one* who leaves this world in this guilty condition § ſinks into eternal ruin. This is infinitely more awful than language can expreſs; but it is as certain as it is awful. My *Civicus* may well ſee reaſon for alarm at the awful ſtate of all mere natural men; and if you, yourſelf, dear *Civicus*, have nothing but the poliſh of education, or an obliging diſpoſition, you may well tremble for your own ſad ſtate; and ſhould this be the caſe, I hope your concern will increaſe about this moſt intereſting matter, for be aſſured, there is the utmoſt reaſon for it. For if you and I build our hopes of eternal happineſs on any attainments of our own, how ſplinded ſoever they may be, we ſhall find ourſelves fatally miſtaken, and miſerably deceived. For neither of us can give to God a ranſom, or make an atonement for one ſingle ſin. Nor can we merit the ſmalleſt favor which God imparts

* Rom. iii. 12 to 19. † Pſalm liii. 2, 4, & li. 5.

‡ Gal. iii. 10. § John iii. 3. & 36.

imparts. How miſerably then are all thoſe who die depending on their own imaginary righteouſneſs and ſuppoſed goodneſs. There is therefore, my *Civicus*, an eſſential change, a radical renovation abſolutely neceſſary for all the ſons of men, in order that they may be ſaved.

Civicus. Pray ſir, have the goodneſs to ſay what that change is, which you ſpeak of, and by what power it is effected.

Evan. I will my *Civicus*; and let me obſerve, our Lord calls this change, a *being born from above.* St. *Paul* calls it regeneration,* and alſo, a new creation. St. *Peter* † calls it a being born again; and in other parts of the new teſtament true chriſtians are ſaid to be born of the ſpirit. Now this is not a corporeal, but a mental change; and it is effected in and on the minds of ſaved ſinners by the agency of the Holy Ghoſt, and no other power can effect it. By this divine agency, the ſoul is reſtored to a ſound knowledge of God, and made to ſee and feel its depravity and ruined condition; and enabled to look to the Saviour by faith for everlaſting life and *to rely on him only for it.* Or in other words, regeneration is a *ſpiritual begetting* by the power of the Holy Ghoſt to *faith in Chriſt*; and a *dependance on him only for ſalvation.* And this faith ever includes *mental illumination, ſelf-knowledge,* and *ſelf-abaſement*; a truſting in, and an entire dependance of the ſoul on the righteouſneſs, death, and atonement of Chriſt only, for acceptance with God: caſting all other hope away for ever. And alſo, this divine change is ever manifeſted by *ſound repentance* and *godly ſorrow* for ſin, and turning from it; for hereby the *dominion* and *ruling* power of ſin is deſtroyed; and holineſs of heart is implanted, and this faith works by love and purifies the heart. And thus the mighty work is wrought; and without which work begun and carried on in your ſoul and mine, my *Civicus,* we can never be ſaved. For none beſides ſuch ſouls, ever did, or ever can go to heaven.

Ethicus,

* Titus iii. 5. † I. Peter i. 23.

Ethicus. But my dear *Evangeliſta,* what then, do you damn to the pit of hell all thoſe who becauſe they never pretend to any ſuch thing as regeneration, but who were nevertheleſs ſober, religious and devout, and ſtrictly juſt towards all men, and who walked humbly with their God; in the ſame manner as you do the openly profane and flagitious? Surely if you do, you muſt entertain very unworthy notions of God, who is ſo gracious and merciful; as to tell us, that to fear him, and to keep his commandments is the whole duty of man; and that he requireth nothing of us, but to do juſtly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with him. What would you have us do more? Are not theſe the words of the Lord himſelf?

Evan. Yes, my *Ethicus,* theſe ſcriptures are certainly the words of God, and conſequently divinely true, but by the tenor of your queries I am diſpoſed to aſk, do you underſtand them? you aſked, if I damned to the pit of hell the ſober, religious, devout, &c. who never pretended to any ſuch thing as regeneration. Now, you may remember, that Jeſus Chriſt has anſwered this query already, and ſaid to us, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he *cannot* ſee the kingdom of God.* So you ſee 'tis not for opinion, nor for want of making pretences, that men are excluded from the kingdom of heaven, but for want of the ſaving change which our Lord inſiſts on; and without which you and I are plainly told by him who cannot err, that we ſhall never be ſaved. But I ſay, your queries make me ſuſpect whether you clearly underſtand thoſe ſcriptures you have quoted, my *Ethicus*

Ethicus. Underſtand them, *Evangeliſta!* you do me a fine compliment now, pray are they not too plain to be miſunderſtood by any man; much leſs by a philoſopher?

Evan. I know your philoſophy, and reſpect your ſcientific underſtanding, my *Ethicus,* but philoſophers‡ are not always the beſt divines; nor is ſound divinity the

* John, iii. 3. ‡ Rom. i. 22, 23.

the offspring of mere human reaſon; ſomething greater than philoſophy is wanting to make us wiſe to ſalvation: and while you uſe your underſtanding in theſe weighty matters, permit me to uſe mine, while you proceed to give us your comment on theſe paſſages which you have quoted; hereby we ſhall ſee if you are more accurately informed than we; and ſhould that be the caſe, we ſhould be very glad to be better informed, therefore we will now liſten to your obſervations, if yo pleaſe.

Ethicus. Well, if it will oblige you, I conſent. Take notice then, that it appears to me, that God, in theſe words, is ſetting before us the line of duty which we are to purſue, and ſhewing us the condition of our acceptance with him, and deſcribing to us what that obedience is which he will accept from us, if we hereby obtain his favor. Now if we ſincerely comply with theſe requiſitions to the utmoſt of our power, he will reward that obedience with his favourable regards; and bleſs ſuch men with everlaſting life. But remember, it is ſincere obedience, and not feigned, which God accepts; and for this he rewards the good man with eternal ſalvation, for he ſays, do this, and thou ſhalt live.

Evan. Dear *Ethicus,* if this is all your philoſophy can do for you, it is manifeſt that you want a better guide: for though by its lights you can ſurvey the viſible heavens, and meaſure the earth; yet the glories of the ſcriptures are hid from your view, and with all your penetration you have not explored the riches of the goſpel. Now, though philoſophy is excellent and important in it place, yet ſacred knowledge is infinitely more ſo. The former you appear to have a good ſhare of, but the latter you appear to be unacquainted with. Excuſe my plainneſs, for it is a ſubject ſo important, that it admits of no palliation or flattery. Therefore I uſe plainneſs not to offend, but to benefit you.

Ethicus. Dear *Evangeliſta* ſpeak your mind freely, I give you credence for your good intentions.

Evan. Dear *Ethicus*, you are very obliging. And I wiſh to prove to you, that I would oblige you in the beſt ſenſe, by pointing out to you the only true way to everlaſting felicity. Now pleaſe to obſerve, that had you known the holy ſcriptures properly, and underſtood their true import you muſt have known, that all men by the fall, are become ſo depraved and guilty, that to be ſaved by any performances of their own, is as impoſſible, as for a capital convict to be acquitted by his obedience to be performed in future; or as impoſſible as it is for an inſolvent to ſatisfy his creditors for paſt contractions by paying for future commodities. Now notice, there is no truth whatever ſet forth more plainly in the ſcriptures, than that of the total depravity of man by nature; the deeply fallen ſtate of all *Adam's* natural offſpring, is there as clearly ſet forth as the light of the ſun when there are no clouds. But you, on the contrary, evidently imply, that there is a capability to do what thoſe ſcriptures you have quoted enjoin. But herein is your great and fatal miſtake: for a corrupt ſinner can do nothing to pleaſe God, any more than a capital offender can merit the king's pardon.' And thoſe ſcriptures which you have refered us to, only point out what men ought to be; and what regenerate ſouls are made to be by divine grace, when this efficacious change is paſſed upon them, in proportion as the divine principles thereof prevail in their minds But you look over all this; and great is your miſtake indeed. This proves, that though your philoſophy may do much in natural things, it has done nothing for you in ſpiritual things. Therefore, you want a better guide. Obſerve alſo, thoſe ſcriptures, and all others of the ſame import, they do not tell us that mere natural men CAN DO theſe things, as you imply; but only ſhew us what GRACE does when it takes hold of the minds of men. Your doctrine of ſincere obedience, therefore, is a NON-ENTITY, or ſomething worſe than that; for you make it a condition of eternal life. But the ſcriptures ſay, eternal life is the gift of God,‡ through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Your

‡ Rom. vi. 23.

conditional ſincere obedience, is *more fatal* than an *ignis fatuus* in a *dark night* among *pits*, *precipices*, and *quagmires*; and you will find it to be ſo, to your *everlaſting loſs*, except your error be *timely* and *radically* corrected. Was man in a ſtate of innocency, having never fallen into ſin, there may then be ſome reaſon on your ſide, and ſome importance in what you ſay; but we know this is not the caſe, for the word of God, and our own obſervation, and experience, tell us, that man is deeply fallen. Do you not perceive that the word of God declares that we are born in ſin,† and ſhapen in iniquity, and that we go aſtray as ſoon as we are born, yea, the divine teſtimony reſpecting natural men is, that they are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins,§ till quickened by divine grace. And that all who are under the law, (profeſſing ſincere obedience to it, to be ſaved by it) are *under the curſe*;* and it is very reaſonable to conclude that it is ſo, for you will not ſay that your ſincere obedience is without a flaw, either that which you profeſs yourſelf or any other man, for the ſcriptures tell us again, that there is *not a juſt man upon earth* who doeth good and ſinneth not. Conſequently there is not a human being living, or that ever did live, (Chriſt only excepted) ſince *Adam's* fall, who can ſay his heart and life were always ſo pure as the law requires; nor that he has always loved God ſo perfectly and perpetually as he ought; nor that he has always loved and ſerved his neighbour as himſelf. Then the contrary is true, there is none that doeth good and ſinneth not, *no not one*. *All have ſinned* and come *ſhort of the glory of God*. Short of that glorious and pure obedience which he requires, both reſpecting himſelf and our fellow men. Then hear what *James* the Apoſtle ſays, Whoſoever keepeth the whole law, and yet offends in *one point*, he is *guilty of all*‡ He becomes a violator of the whole law. Nothing ſurely can be more deciſive than this is, to ſhew us that man is a ſinner, in himſelf, *condemned and loſt*; being *totally corrupt* before God. And as ſuch he can no more reverſe

† Pſalm, li. 5.
* Gal. iii. 10.
§ Eph. ii. 1.
‡ Jam. il. 10.

reverſe the ſentence which God has pronounced againſt him than a *malefactor* can reverſe the ſentence of the law he has broken, and for which he is juſtly condemned to ſuffer and die, nor can he ſatisfy the law and juſtice of God by any ſuppoſed obedience of his, any more than one who owes *ten thouſand pounds*, can ſatisfy his creditor by paying *only one farthing*. I hope my *Ethicus*, you begin to ſee your miſtake; and that it now appears evident to you, that a natural man is a corrupt ſinner, juſtly condemned by the holy law of God. That he has *no more natural fitneſs for heaven*, than an *Ox* has to *live in the Sea*, or a *Fiſh* to *graze on the Land*. And that therefore, he muſt be born again or be *damned*. *Mark*, xvi. 16.

Ethicus. You want not arguments, *Evangeliſta*, to ſupport your opinions, I confeſs, but yet I am not convinced but that it is ſtill true, that every man muſt work out his own ſalvation. Does not the Apoſtle ſay as much?

Evan. No my *Ethicus*, he does not ſay this to every man, for he is there ſpeaking to a certain ſpecific number of believers in Jeſus, at Philippi,‡ whoſe ſalvation was already wrought out for them, *i. e.* who being redeemed by the precious Blood of Chriſt, had been, in conſequence of that, called by grace, united to Chriſt by faith, and to one another in *chriſtian love* and *church fellowſhip*: and who conſequently were not an *indiſcriminate multitude*, but a *particular church of Chriſt*; devoted to his honor and glory: and his meaning is, that thoſe believers to whom he wrote, ſhould uſe diligence to diſcover their own *perſonal intereſt* in the ſalvation which Chriſt himſelf had effected for them. For it is not enough (for our comfort) to know that Chriſt has redeemed all thoſe who believe in him; but every ſaint wants a *particular diſcovery* of his own *individual intereſt* in that redemption; and this bleſſing is promiſed, and therefore to be obtained, in the uſe of appointed means. Now this exhortation of the Apoſtle is deſigned to ſtir up the Philippian Believers to

‡ Phil. ii. 12, 13.

to a diligent uſe of the means; that hereby they may obtain that comfort and joy in believing that an aſſurance of their own intereſt in Chriſt would neceſſarily inſpire. And not to teach natural unrenewed men, that it is in their power to effect their own ſalvation by what you call ſincere obedience. Can you ſuppoſe that God would accept that which he *forbids* men to offer to him? Have you never read that the *blemiſhed*, the *lame*, and *deformed*,* were forbidden of old to be offered to God in ſacrifice? and do you ſuppoſe that God is altered now? Will he *now* accept of *filthy rags* inſtead of *fine linen?* Or will he accept imperfection and ſin inſtead of purity and perfection? Do you not know, or will you not be informed, that man has been put in a ſtate of perfection, but at the trial which put him to the teſt he fell? and that thereby he became *abſolutely faulty* and condemned? *Adam*, you know, was the fountain of human nature, his poſterity are the ſtreams which flow from that fountain; and reaſon will convince you, or any man who will hear reaſon, that ſuch as the fountain is, ſuch the ſtreams will be which flow from it. If therefore, the fountain is corrupted the ſtreams cannot be pure. A corrupt fountain muſt ſend forth impure ſtreams; for philoſophy will convince you, that no effect can riſe above its cauſe. Therefore if the parent of humanity became ſinful by tranſgreſſion, the whole maſs of his poſterity muſt have been corrupted in him, and man now cannot be born pure. Polution is born with every child of *Adam's* family. And reaſon further confirms the fact, by adverting to the pains and groans of dying infants; and to the incredible numbers who die under one year's age, as well as to all the other dreadful evils which humanity ſuffers in conſequence of ſin. For it is evident that a holy and righteous God does not, and will not puniſh pure creatures who never offend him, but who are free from all defilement. No, this can never be. But yet we ſee infants ſuffer and die, though they have not ſinned actually. It is evident then, that the polution of nature in which every child

* Lev. xxi. 18. to 21.

child of *Adam* is born, hath in it the ſeed of every abomination, that ever was or ever will be committed. And therefore, the natural man, like the leper of old, can perform no acceptable obedience to God at all till his leproſy of ſin is radically cured by ſpiritual regeneration. And this is the work of God only, and it is effected ſolely by his power. Therefore your ſincere obedience can have no real exiſtence except in the perverted minds of phariſaical perſons. Let me give you a verſe to meditate on from the ſweet ſinger of our evangelical Iſrael.

Wild and unwholeſome as the root,
Will all the branches be:
How can we hope for living fruit
From ſuch a deadly tree?

Watts.

Civicus. Dear *Evanegliſta*, I am ſtruck with your obſervations, and now feel pungently their invincible force. I am fully convinced, that both reaſon and ſcripture ſupport your doctrine. Beſides, I now feel, alas! the awful witneſs within, that it is true of myſelf in particular. I am one of the fallen family of the firſt *Adam*, and I now ſee that my nature is as corrupt as you have deſcribed it to be. Nor is my life more pure than my nature. O Lord, I am altogether ſinful, fallen, depraved, and guilty! I have broken the whole of thy righteous law, and deſerve to ſuffer for ever, its righteous curſe and thy juſt vengeance. I now no more ſay, I am as good as any of my neighbours, but feel that I rank with the worſt of ſinners. And oh! tell me! can there be mercy for me! I have no excellency either of nature or practice, but am defiled and depraved, both by original guilt and actual tranſgreſſion. If mercy interpoſes not in my behalf, I ſee I muſt periſh. I cannot entertain the ſmalleſt hope of acceptance with God for any thing I ever did or ever can do. I ſee, mercy alone, muſt be all my plea. "God be merciful to me a ſinner," ſuits me now as much as ever it did the poor publican of old, or any poor ſinner that ever lived. And if mercy ſhould be ſhewn to me,

there never was an object more abſolutely indebted to it than I ſhall be, nor any in whom its riches can be more magnified. My dear *Evangeliſta,* do you think that one ſo vile as I may obtain mercy?

Evan. Dear *Civicus,* if you feel your need of mercy, and are heartily willing to accept it in God's own way, you cannot be ſo willing to accept as he is to give. *John,* vi. 37. & x. 11.

Civicus. I own that is good news, but my heart trembles while my ears hear the welcome ſound; for I think I can ſay, I am heartily willing to accept mercy on the Lord's own terms, and to be ſaved in his own way. But ſay my *Evangeliſta,* can you tell me the way by which ſinners are ſaved? This is what my ſoul wiſhes to know.

Evan. Dear *Civicus.* Take notice then, that the ſcripture informs us moſt amply, that as in *Adam* all his natural ſeed died,* ſo all believers in Jeſus (who are his ſpiritual ſeed) ſhall be made alive. The meaning of this is, that all thoſe who ſee their ſin and feel their guilt, and believe in and depend on Chriſt as a ſaviour, ſhall obtain the forgiveneſs of ſins and everlaſting life. For he came into our world to obey and ſuffer for all his believing people, *i. e.* for every poor ſinner who feels his need of him, and longs to be ſaved by him, and he has fully effected the work he came to perform for guilty men, and now, by him all that ſeek ſalvation from him ſhall be imparted to them the bleſſing they ſeek, even life for evermore. It is for ſuch as you, my *Civicus,* that Jeſus died, the juſt for the unjuſt, to bring them to God. Therefore, all thoſe who believe in him, have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins. And by him, all who believe in him, are juſtified from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of *Moſes,* or any obedience of theirs to any law whatever. And he caſts out none who come to him, but ſaves them to the

* Rom. v. 16 to 18.—I. Cor. xv. 22.—Eph. i. 7.—Col. i. 14. I. John, i. 7.

the uttermoſt. Never did any ſinner, however great his crimes may have been, meet a denial, who went to the Saviour for mercy. And my dear *Civicus* will find his love is ſtill as great, and that in going to the Saviour he will find a hearty welcome. For none ever ſought his grace in vain, nor ſhall my *Civicus* have to ſay, he ſought the Saviour's mercy in vain. Jeſus will not deny your ſuit, no, he will receive you graciouſly and love you freely. Therefore fear not, but ariſe and go unto him.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta,* I own this is delightful news, and my heart begins to feel the dawning of hope, but yet, I cannot diveſt myſelf of fear and doubt; and that from a conſciouſneſs which I feel of having neglected and deſpiſed the bleſſed Redeemer ſo long, and ſo aggravatedly. O my Saviour! I have neglected thee, I have deſpiſed thee, and wilt thou have mercy on ſuch a traitor as I have been to thee?

Evan. My dear *Civicus* may know the Saviour will not reject him if he will but regard his word. What is it? Him that cometh to me I will in *no wiſe* caſt out. Not on any account, not for any thing whatſoever; though his ſins be *red as crimſon** or *black as hell*; they ſhall be waſhed away entirely, and his ſoul ſhall be white as ſnow; and he ſhall be freely and fully juſtified and accepted; his ſoul alſo ſhall be ſealed to the day of complete redemption, and made as happy in the love of God as if he had never ſinned at all.† This is what our Saviour would have you to believe; therefore doubt no longer, Jeſus calls you, go to him. None have reaſon to fear, but thoſe who ſtay away from him, and will not come to him. Therefore be not faithleſs, but believe and be happy.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta,* I think my ſoul now feels determined to rely on the Saviour, to believe in him, and to follow him to death! But ah! I feel I have no ſtrength, nor any ability, but in the language of the evangelical poet, I would venture nigh, ſaying,

A guilty,

* Iſaiah, i. 18. † Rom. viii. 1.

A guilty, weak, and helpleſs worm,
On thy kind arms I fall.
Be thou my ſtrength and righteouſneſs,
My Jeſus and my all. *Amen.*

WATTS.

Evan. Well, my dear, *Civicus*, it gives me the moſt heartfelt ſatisfaction to hear your happy and bleſſed reſolution. And from this delightful hour, may it be found by my dear friend, that he is become a diſciple of Jeſus, and a follower of the Lamb whitherſoever he goeth; and happy in the Saviour's love. If this is really the caſe, and I truſt it is, O what a bleſſed walk will this be to you my dear friend; and how happy ſhall I be that we have thus converſed!

Civicus. O that I may realize it! and may my life be from henceforth devoted to him who loved ſinners and died for them, and I would hope, for me alſo. And may the Saviour bleſs you, my dear *Evangeliſta*, and cauſe you to prove, that your labour of love has not been in vain though beſtowed on ſuch a poor ſinner as I, but may you be rewarded by our Lord a thouſand fold. *Amen.*

Evan. Amen. I truſt your prayer will be granted, both for yourſelf and me, and that we ſhall have reaſon to be thankful for this pleaſing, and this agreeable converſation, as long as we live, and that when our time on earth is ſpent, I hope we ſhall meet beyond death in eternal glory.

Civicus. May the Lord be graciouſly pleaſed to grant this, for the Redeemer's ſake. *Amen.*

Evan. Gentlemen, adieu.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, adieu.

Ethicus. Sir, I wiſh you well.

DIALOGUE II.

Second morning's walk and converſation. 1. CIVICUS *led further into the depth of his fallen nature.* 2. *Is ſtripped of all hope and truſt in himſelf; and filled with doubts and fears.* 3. *At this* ETHICUS *is offended and leaves them.* 4. CIVICUS *is enabled to hope and truſt in the Saviour.*

CIVICUS *and* ETHICUS *meet* EVANGELISTA, *and after mutual civility,* CIVICUS *thus began:*

CIVICUS. Dear *Evangeliſta.* The weight of your converſation, yeſterday morning, is not worn of my ſpirits. It has left an indelible impreſſion I aſſure you, and I long to have it renewed.

Evan. Dear *Civicus,* I am very glad to find my converſation had ſo good an effect; and I truſt my hopes will be realized, and your prayers anſwered; and I hope our converſation will now be renewed to your ſatisfaction, and our mutual benefit. And you, my *Ethicus,* I hope you alſo are well diſpoſed to this kind of converſe; we were agreeably entertained yeſterday morning, and very profitably too. I hope our preſent will not be leſs ſo.

Ethicus. Sir, you do me honor, and (thank heaven) I am as well diſpoſed to this converſe as before, for you muſt know I take pleaſure in thinking and ſpeaking on divine ſubjects. And particularly ſo where reaſon holds the throne, and the dignity of human nature is properly ſupported, for I think the powers of reaſon and ſpeech were given to man that he might communicate to his neighbour of that ſtore of wiſdom he may have acquired.

Evan. I am ready to admit, that reaſon, ſpeech, and all the other faculties, were given to us for our neighbour's

neighbour's good as well as our own. And I will grant this to you, that reaſon is a noble faculty, and the gift of God, and a very great bleſſing; but while I grant this to you, hope you will grant this to me, *viz.* that revelation* is the ſupreme guide, and that it is the moſt rational we ſhould ſubmit to its dictates, for you know the Deity ſpeaks here; and the Almighty cannot falſify, or flatter; therefore if we ſpeak conſiſtently with ſcripture, we need not be centured for ſo ſpeaking; or if we ſhould, we may ſafely deſpiſe ſuch cenſure.

Ethicus. I own there is truth in what you ſay, and I am willing your obſervations to my neighbour *Civicus* ſhould be made without any interruption from mine.

Civicus. It can be no interruption to us, dear *Ethicus,* to hear any judicious remarks you may have to make, for theſe may tend to mutual edification, and that will enliven the diſcourſe, not hinder it.

Evan. Certainly Sir, therefore my good friend *Ethicus,* I beg you will be free.

Ethicus. I intend now, principally to hear, and I mean to abide by my intention. I may make a friendly remark or two now and then, if you pleaſe, but I ſhall hear chiefly.

Evan. Uſe your freedom and welcome, and I ſhall do the ſame. The children of goſpel freedom are free indeed, may we each enjoy it in its utmoſt extent, both now and at all times.

Civicus. Amen. That is what I want my *Evang.* I feel I want it, my mind has been ſo engaged and agitated with the meditation of our paſt morning's converſation, that I could not ſleep in the night. I was led into the depths of my native depravity and corruption, and made to ſee and feel the truth of your reaſoning to ſuch a degree, as I want words to deſcribe. I ſaw the truth of your aſſertion, that every man is now, not only a fallen creature, but that the nature

* II. Peter, i. 11.—II. Tim. iii. 15 to 17.

nature of every human being born into this world, is full of the ſeeds of every abomination,* and I am convinced it is my own caſe; for I ſee ſo much of my depravity, that I loath myſelf before God. Yea, and I perceive clearly, that all my performances are ſo mixed with ſinful infirmity, that I call my beſt doings but ſo many *ſhining crimes*. I ſee evidently that it is wholly owing to ſovereign mercy that I am not in hell. And I now feel myſelf ſo vile, that I am afraid to hope, that one ſo ſinful as I can be ſaved. It is very clear to me, that the doctrine of St. *James* is divinely true (as you were obſerving) that he who offends in one point is guilty of all; has broken the whole law of God, though not in the outward act, yet it is in the fallen heart, and conſequently, the holy law of God curſes the ſinner for it. For I now ſee alſo, that the law of God is, as *David* ſays, ſo broad that it extends to every thought.† And I ſee too, that Jeſus Chriſt deſcribes my heart, and the heart of every man born into this world, when he ſays, Out of the heart of man proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c. Thus I diſcover likewiſe, that I am in this ſenſe a violator of every precept of that law, in one way or other, either directly by actual guilt, or indirectly by the nature‡ and conſequences of ſin. And ſurely, if ever I am ſaved, it muſt be by a miracle of grace! But tell me, dear *Evangeliſta*, can you believe that a wretch ſo vile as I, can be ſaved?

Evan. Saved! my dear *Civicus*! Why you are ſaved already** in the intention and purpoſe of the great God,§ and redeemed by the precious blood of Chriſt, and you have this evidence of it, that it is really ſo, by your being ſaved in a happy degree from your native ignorance and ſelf-conceit. This is no ſmall mercy. How came you to know yourſelf to be ſo

* Matt. xv. 19, 20.—Jer. xvii. 9. † Pſalm, cxix. 96.

‡ Gen. vi. 5.—Prov. vi. 14. § II. Tim. i. 9.

** There is an inſeperable connection betwixt ſound conviction and ſalvation; and where the former is real, the latter is certain; for both flow from the divine purpoſe, however recently diſcovered,

ſo vile now, any more than formerly. Lately, you know, you were ſo good as any of your neighbours, for ought you knew, and were as happy as any of them. But your note is changed it ſeems, and the reaſon of this is, becauſe your heart is changed, and becauſe God has ſhewn you to yourſelf, and made you ſee what you really are; and thereby taught you to know yourſelf, and to ſee your own true character in his light, by ſhewing you your picture in the glaſs of his law. But you know you could not have ſeen your picture there, if God had not given you eyes to ſee it. This ſhews that you are in ſome happy degree brought out of the night of nature to behold a meaſure of that ſaving light which beams from the Sun of Righteouſneſs,* and enlightens every regenerate ſoul† who is ſpiritually born in the new world of ſaving grace. In the natural world, you know it is impoſſible to convey the beauty of colours by ſounds, to a man who is born blind, it is abſolutely neceſſary that he be bleſt with the faculty of ſight before he can ſee, or have any adequate idea of them. So it is in the world of grace. You may tell a man who is in the night of nature, of his own deformity and depravity, and of the beauties and glories of Chriſt, for ages, could you continue ſo long, but except God give him a ſpiritual ſight, he will not ſee his own deformity, nor the beauties of the Saviour. And, conſequently, will neither loath the former, nor admire the latter. But you ſay you ſee ſo much of ſelf that you loath it. I am glad of it, nor do I believe you would ever love the Saviour, till you were brought to loath ſelf and hate ſin. This, therefore, is a good ſign, my dear *Civicus*; but then I would aſk, are you willing to be nothing, that Chriſt may be all in all in the matter of your ſalvation? For I would obſerve to you, that a real Chriſtian not only ſees that there is no other way of ſalvation, but is diſpoſed moſt heartily to approve of Chriſt as the only Saviour; and has no wiſh or deſire to have any other. But ſelf, and ſin, and every thing which ſtands oppoſed to Chriſt, he caſts away: and relies on the Saviour only.

Do

* Mal. iv. 2.—II. Pet. i. 19. † John. i. 9.

Do you, my *Civicus*, thus approve of, and receive the Saviour? He is to his deſciples, prophet, prieſt, and king. Are you deſirous to have him ſuch to you? I muſt ſay, if your convictions are of the ſaving kind, as I take them to be; you feel the abſolute need of his teaching in order to make you wiſe to ſalvation; and of his atonement to do away your guilt; of his righteouſneſs, to juſtify you; of his ſpirit, to ſanctify you; of his interceſſion for you in heaven; and of his kingly power and authority to ſubdue his and your enemies, and to reign in you as he does in the heavenly world. If God has created in your ſoul ſuch ſentiments and feelings as theſe, no doubt remains of your being brought out of nature's darkneſs into the ſpiritual world of grace and light.

Civicus. I think I can ſay I underſtand, in ſome degree, that Chriſt is all this to his people which you have mentioned. I know I want him in all theſe reſpects myſelf; and that I muſt have him as ſuch to me, or I muſt periſh. This I know; and if my heart deceives me not, I think I can ſay, that with all my powers I approve of Chriſt, and chuſe him as my only Saviour; caſting all other confidence away. I would have Jeſus for my Saviour, and I deſire no other, as far as I know the feelings of my heart; and I would be ſaved by him from ſin and ſelf.

Evan. I feel pleaſure at what you now relate, my *Civicus*, and take it to be evidential of ſound conviction, and alſo of ſaving illumination. To have this knowledge of Chriſt, and this approbation of him which you ſpeak of, is to be illuminated by the divine Spirit, to be converted and born again of the Holy Ghoſt: for ſurely you did not beget theſe feelings by your own power, nor could any power but that which is divine beſtow them on you. How great then is your mercy!

Civicus. I own my *Evangeliſta*, I never had any ſuch views or feelings till your converſation awakened them in me; and then, I did not at firſt, at all underſtand you, but was filled with amazement at what you

ſaid. But while you were reaſoning on the fallen condition of man, and his *guilty*, *depraved*, and *curſed* ſtate, I began to have theſe views of myſelf, which I have now been deſcribing to you.

Evan. I am happy to hear this honeſt confeſſion, and I freely tell you, I really think divine providence directed our foot-ſteps to take that walk, in the ſame manner as it directed the Woman of Samaria to the well of old, when the bleſſed Jeſus ſat there in waiting till ſhe arrived. You came by when I was walking, that we might enter on our yeſterday's converſe. She was brought to the well by divine providence, that Jeſus might ſpeak to her heart, the words of eternal life; and you were ſent by, at the appointed ſeaſon, when I was ſent out to walk, that we might enter on that converſation, and you be benefitted thereby. How wonderful are the ways of our gracious Lord! How deep his counſels! How kind his deſigns! But now let me whiſper in your ear.—I wonder if our friend *Ethicus* has had any of theſe feelings.

Civicus. Indeed I can't ſay; but I fear not. Do aſk him.

Evan. I will.——My good friend *Ethicus*, you have heard our converſation, and I dare ſay have obſerved what a ſtrange alteration has been made in the feelings and views of our friend *Civicus*. Have you felt any thing like it on your mind, my dear *Ethicus?*

Ethicus. I like your converſation for the *moſt part* very well, Gentlemen. But I cannot ſay I underſtand much of thoſe impreſſions and feelings which my neighbour has expreſſed. And, indeed! to tell you plainly, gentlemen, the chief thing I concern myſelf about in religion is, to maintain and keep up a *blameleſs* and *reputable deportment* among my good neighbours and chriſtian friends. To be ſtrictly juſt and upright towards God and my neighbours, is all I aim at, and all I want. As for your religious impreſſions, I leave to their votaries, and betake myſelf to a more *rational* and *judicious* way. I am told in the New Teſtament that

that he who fears God and works righteouſneſs, is accepted of him. And this is my choice, and my practice; for no man can charge me with any evil. My neighbours may do as they like, but this is my way, and I intend to keep in it.

Evan. I am not diſappointed at your anſwer, ſir, the ſentiments you have now expreſſed, are juſt ſuch as I thought you entertained (notice that, my Civicus) I thought you were of the ſelf-righteous turn before, and now I find I was not miſtaken; but I ſincerely wiſh I had. For nothing appears plainer to me than this, that you are juſt in the very ſpirit and ſtate of the Jews and Phariſees of old, who truſted in themſelves that they were righteous,* and deſpiſed others. So it appears you do, ſir; but let us remind you, that they were in all probability every way as ſtrictly juſt and devout as you can be: but for all that, you know, they were ſeverely reproved and rejected by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. And ſhould you die as you now are, there is every reaſon to believe, that you will ſhare the ſame fate. But O that this may never be your caſe!

Ethicus. I will live and die in my ſentiments, in *ſpite* of all the *nonſenſe* of all the *enthuſiaſts* in the world, and abide by the conſequences.

Evan. Probably you may, and ſink to hell to the bargain, for you muſt not expect to fare better than your predeceſſors, who, for ought I know, were wiſer and better than you. But remember, to them the Saviour ſaid, *Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees Hypocrites!*† *How can you eſcape the damnation of Hell!*

Ethicus. Fine candour this! I took you to be a man of good breeding, but are theſe your manners, ſir? Have you nothing but *Damnation and Hell* to fling at thoſe, who though wiſer and better than you, are thus rudely treated by you, for a circumſtantial difference

* Luke, xviii. 9.—Rom. ix. 31, 32, 33.

† Matt. xxiii. 13, 14. & 33.

difference of ſentiment only. Oh ſir! I am quite diſappointed in you, I took you to be a gentleman of candour and liberal ſentiment; but I find I am quite miſtaken.

Evan. Sir, I ſhould be heartily glad to treat you as a man enlightened of God, and converted to him, as a believer in Chriſt, and conſequently in the way of ſalvation; and on that ground, ſhould with the greateſt good-will give you the right-hand of fellowſhip, and now do ſo, were I not fully convinced I ſhould *injure* you by ſo doing. There is ſuch a thing as a *friendly ſeverity*, and when that is needed, it is the greateſt cruelty to withhold it; and a token of the trueſt friendſhip to beſtow it. And by that friendſhip am I now actuated towards you, Mr. *Ethicus*, and becauſe I wiſh to prevent your going on in a courſe of fatal error.

Ethicus. You may keep this friendſhip of yours to yourſelf, ſir, I want it not, *I thank God* I have a *good heart*, and my life is as good as any of my neighbours. Therefore you may as well keep your advice, and give it to ſome other. For the preſent I bid you farewell, and return.

Evan. Farewell, ſir, and I wiſh you a better acquaintance both with your own heart, the word of God, and the Saviour. Farewell till the judgment day.——Now my Civicus, you may ſee by your neighbour's conduct what your own would be, if like him you were left to your own wiſdom. Do you think yourſelf any wiſer or better than he, of yourſelf.

Civicus. No, my *Evangeliſta*, I am ſure I am not. If there is any difference, the *bad* ſide preponderates in *my* ſcale.

Evan. How is it then, that you have been brought to know yourſelf, while he remains ignorant; ſeeing he is a man of as good underſtanding as you, and has had the ſame means as you, to have his mind informed as yours now is, both of his ſin and miſery, and of Chriſt Jeſus, the ſinner's friend?

Civicus.

Civicus. I can give no other reaſon than this, it is the Lord alone who has made the difference,* by his illuminating ſpirit, and of his own mere good pleaſure, I can account for it in no other way.

Evan. That is the very thing. It is the Lord who has made the difference; you he has enlightened, and he is left to his own ſuppoſed wiſdom. The divine Spirit has opened your eyes, but his remain as they were; and therefore you *ſee*, while he remains *blind*. So divinely true is the ſaying of our Lord, Two men ſhall be in the field, the one ſhall be taken and the other ſhall be left.† The one ſhall be under the influence and teaching of the Holy Ghoſt, and made wiſe unto ſalvation. The other ſhall be left to himſelf. He whom divine mercy laid hold on, is directed to the good phyſician, and his ſpiritual maladies are cured, but he who is left behind, retains his mental diſtemper, and is likely to periſh in it. On the one hand how great is the mercy to the ſoul graciouſly taken; and on the other, how awful is the end like to prove. But this ſhews that my *Civicus* is a veſſel of mercy,* and a ſubject of ſpecial grace, and now the Lord is making it known to you.

Civicus. But let me aſk my dear *Evangeliſta*; may not a man be brought to know and feel this, without being made a partaker of ſpecial grace?

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, there can be no doubt but a man might be able to learn the Goſpel as a Syſtem, and as a Syſtem, he might be able to ſpeak of and defend its doctrines. But the learning the Goſpel as a Syſtem of doctrine, is one thing, and an heartfelt conviction of its reality and importance, is another. I might be led to adopt a ſound creed without having my heart affected or my life influenced by it. But when the Goſpel is brought home to the mind with effectual power, the ſoul is enlightened to ſee its beauty, and made to feel its own abſolute need of intereſt therein

* I. Cor. iv. 7.—Pſalm, cx. 3.—John, x. 27, 28. & vi. 44.

† Matt. xxiv. 41, 42.

therein; and is hereby inclined‡ *powerfully* to choſe *cordially* this way of ſalvation which the Goſpel reveals in preference to all others, and to die to all other hope. And in this divine mirror, the *glory, ſuitability,* and *all-ſufficiency* of the Saviour is ſeen; and alſo his willingneſs to ſave. Thus the ſoul is *perſuaded* and *enabled* to embrace, and rely on him alone for ſalvation. And be aſſured, my dear *Civicus,* wherever this is known and felt, there a work of grace is begun. A work that is divine in its origin, operation and completion; for it is wrought by the Holy Ghoſt. And if my *Civicus* can ſay he has felt this, I will freely tell him God has begun a good work on the mind of my friend. And if ſo, may you be able to ſee it and take courage.

Civicus. I believe I may ſay I have felt all that you have now ſaid, and that my feelings go to the utmoſt of your obſervations, my dear *Evangeliſta*; and hope begins to be a little ſtronger than it was, but I cannot ſay without a doubt, that I have felt the important change which our Lord inſiſted on to *Nicodemus,* but I can ſay, I love the Saviour, and truſt in him, and wiſh for no other way of ſalvation. I deſire to be ſaved as a poor, guilty, periſhing ſinner, to the glory of divine grace and mercy, without any thing of my own. And if I am not deceived by a falſe heart, I think I deſire ſalvation from every ſin as much as I wiſh for ſalvation from hell. But can I hope that I have felt that all-powerful change called the New Birth?

Evan. Why my *Civicus,* had you theſe feelings ever ſince you were born? Did they ſpring from nature think you? Or did the Adverſary give theſe feelings to you?

Civicus. No my dear friend, I had not theſe feelings by nature, nor ever ſince I was born, nor do I believe the Adverſary either could or would give theſe feelings to me; and yet I tremble to ſay I have felt the change called the new creation. *Gal* vi. 15.

Evan.

‡ Rom. ix. 23.—Pſalm, cx. 3.—Rev. xxii. 17.

Evan. But have you not new views of yourſelf? and new diſcoveries of the Saviour? Do you not ſee ſin to be odious and hateful, as well as deſtructive? And, did you not once love it as much as you now hate it? Do you not deſire *holineſs* from the Saviour, as well as *happineſs?* And would you not be like him and live to his glory, as well as be ſaved by him? Say, my dear *Civicus*, are theſe your genuine feelings or no?

Civicus. I think I can truly ſay, theſe really are my genuine feelings and deſires; and truſt I ſhall never reſt till I have a full realization and enjoyment of all you have been ſpeaking of. But yet, I want more ſatisfying evidence of my being born again: for I would neither deceive nor be deceived, on this moſt important ſubject for a million of worlds. O my Saviour! ſhew me what I am in thy ſight.

Evan. O my friend, what an alteration! You, who were lately as good as any of your neighbours; (though no doubt you allowed yourſelf in many indulgences of a ſinful nature, and were beſt pleaſed when your corrupt propenſities were gratified); now, all theſe are thought of with ſorrow and ſelf-loathing, and deep humiliation, and this is as it ought to be. And ſay, is not this your caſe?

Civicus. I thing I can ſay, yes, it really is. But I feel ſuch remnants of latent ſin, that make me fear I am not ſavingly renewed, and this caſts me down, for I want to get free from them. I have prayed for it again, and again, but I find ſin yet remains. And, will you ſay that this is conſiſtent with regeneration?

Evan. No doubt of it at all.—Yes, my *Civicus*, the regenerate feel this,* and they will feel more or leſs of it till they get to glory; and you muſt expect to ſhare in the trial (for it is a trial) as well to you, as to all the ſaints. Therefore, this mighty mental renovation, which you have now been relating as your own experience, is actually that very important change which the ſcriptures call a *new creation*, or a *being born again.* There is created in you, by the power of the divine

* Rom. vii. 9, to the end.—Gal. v. 7.—I. John, i. 8.

divine Spirit, a knowledge of yourſelf as a loſt periſhing ſinner, which very lately you had not: alſo a knowledge of the Saviour as he is revealed in the Goſpel: and of the Lord, as a ſin-forgiving God through him; whom to know is life eternal. Very lately you were as ignorant of all this, as the beaſts that periſh. Moreover, there is a hatred to ſin, and a love to holineſs imparted to you; and what is yet more, there is a hearty love to the Saviour, and the moſt chearful willingneſs to *obey* him, as well as to be ſaved by him, given to you. Do you not feel your ſoul thus *powerfully inclined and diſpoſed?*

Civicus. At leaſt I can ſay, I think I do, and that I cannot be ſatisfied without this.

Evan. Then let the words of the Apoſtle *John* decide your caſe; *Every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.** You feel love to God, which will not let you reſt without a likeneſs to God; this ſhews the reality of the divine change. Surely then, the new creation is begun in you, and you are paſſed from death unto life: and the ſame hand which begun the work,† will carry it on and finiſh it. But before I have done, I wiſh to recall to your rememberance, that ſaying of our Lord; *Two men ſhall be in the field, the one ſhall be taken and the other ſhall be left.* Mercy, my dear *Civicus,* took hold of you, and left *Ethicus* to follow his own ways! The conſequence was, you know, he left us; and St. *John* tells you the reaſon, *he went out from us, becauſe he was not of us.*‡ That's the reaſon; but oh! wonderful grace to you! And what an awful judgment to him! But the Lord of all does right, both in the methods of his grace, and the judgments of his hand. Let my dear *Civicus* learn to adore that mercy by which he is diſtinguiſhed from phariſees and hypocrites, who place all their hopes on empty notions, and who, conſequently, remain in the congregation of the dead. And while we are called to

* I. John, iv. 7.

† Phil. i. 6.—Rom. viii. 36, to the end.—John, x. 28.

‡ I. John, ii. 19.

to obſerve the wonders which grace has performed for you, and for me, let us try if we can tune our hearts and our voices, to celebrate the high praiſes of our gracious and merciful God and Saviour, in ſinging the following Hymn. I perſuade myſelf, that it is ſuited to your feelings, and that it will enliven your ſoul, expand your powers, and make your heart to be muſical with Jehovah's praiſes.

HYMN.

The awakened Sinner's confeſſion and comfort.

1 MOST kind and gracious Lord,
My guilt I now confeſs;
I have thy holy laws abhor'd,
And madly ſcorn'd thy grace.

2 I was conceiv'd in ſin,
And born a child of wrath;
And all my actions have been in
The road that leads to death.

3 Averſe to all that's good,
And prone to all that's ill;
In love with ſin, I hated God,
And ſerv'd the prince of hell.

4 Thus in my mad career,
The downward road I ran
Regardleſs how I ſhould appear
Before th' eternal Throne.

5 But bleſſed be his name!
His grace preſerv'd me ſtill;
Till he my enmity o'ercame,
And turn'd my ſtubborn will.

6 All glory to the Lord,
His matchleſs love and grace
Has on my ſinful ſoul beſtow'd,
Free pardon, life, and peace.

7 Eternal praiſe be given
To our redeeming King: Let

Let all the Saints in earth and heav'n,
His great ſalvation ſing.

8 'Twas Chriſt's own ſovereign love,
That turn'd my ſtubborn heart,
And made my ſoul his grace approve,
And bid my curſe depart.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, I thank you for this Hymn. I can ſing it with all my heart, for it expreſſes the very feelings of my mind; one would think you had made it on purpoſe. I feel every line of it applies to my caſe, one would think your caſe had been ſimilar to my own

Evan. As face anſwereth to face in a glaſs,* ſo the heart of man to man; and the caſe of one chriſtian is often pourtrayed by that of another; this is exactly the caſe here. Theſe lines were the feelings of my own mind more than twenty years ago, and many, and many a time ſince. For I too have reaſon to complain with you, that I have not got rid of the remnants of a body of ſin. Nor am I yet out of the reach of the darts of Satan; nor have I any innate ſtrength of my own to overcome him; but ſometimes I can; I am ſtrong in divine ſtrength, I never can be ſtrong in any other. *II. Cor.* xii. 9.

Civicus. Indeed! What, my *Evangilſta* feel like this?

Evan. Juſt ſo, I aſſure you, for I have the ſame ſort of heart as you have.

Civicus. Then I truſt I have the experience of a chriſtian. For my caſe has been now expreſſed by yours moſt exactly. Oh! how good to have the counſel and converſation of a chriſtian friend! I could not have thought any good man ever felt like me, but now I find you do. It is a comfort to know my caſe is not ſingular; and from this happy moment I truſt I ſhall retain a ſenſe of the love and mercy of my Saviour, to me the vileſt and chiefeſt of ſinners.

Evan.

* Prov. xxvii. 19.

Evan. I am truly happy to find I have been in any meaſure the helper of your joy. May you now go on in divine ſtrength, looking to the Saviour, for remember your ſtrength is in him, and not in yourſelf; and while he upholds your goings you will be ſafe. Look to him and depend upon him for all you want; and all your real wants will be ſupplied. We muſt now part, time reminds us of our duty and our callings, and to that we muſt now attend. But let us meet on the next Sabbath at the Houſe of God: and there I hope we ſhall enjoy his gracious ſmiles, and be cheared with his heavenly love. Till then I bid you adieu.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, adieu.—But let me have a ſhare in your ſupplications at the divine Throne.

Evan. Let that be mutual, my dear Friend. *Amen.*

DIALOGUE III.

On the Sabbath Morning CIVICUS *meets* EVANGELISTA *at the Houſe of God.* And before worſhip began, they diſcourſed as follows:*

CIVICUS. Dear *Evangeliſta*, I am thankful for being ſpared to ſee the beginning of a *new* Sabbath to *me*, and for that I have met you here. But I freely own I reſemble a perſon uſhered into a new world, rather than an inhabitant of Zion; but I am happy to be brought hither at laſt, and very glad to meet you in this place.

Evan. I partake of your pleaſure, my Friend, and am

* *Evangelista*, agreeable to his name, was a Chriſtian Preacher, in a Church of the primitive order, where there is a *ſtated Paſtor*, and a number of pious and gifted members, whom God has qualified to preach the Goſpel, and the Church approved for that work. Our Friend *E.* is one of them.—But we confeſs that this ſhews what the Churches *ought* to be, rather than what they *are* in general at preſent.——See *Acts*, xiii. 1, 2, 3.

am equally happy to find you here. And, may the Lord of Sabbath ſhed his heavenly influence on each of us, and the congregation at large; and make *this* a delightful antipaſt of the eternal Sabbath.

Civicus. Amen. Lord grant it, I humbly pray thee, for thy name ſake! And grant we may be royally fed and entertained in thy houſe this day.

But my *Evan.* Being ſuch a novice, I fear I ſhall be awkward in your mode of worſhip. I hope you will excuſe that. Pray who is your miniſter to-day?

Evan. As to the former, you may well be eaſy, for our mode of worſhip has no intricacies in it, and you will find it eaſy to practice. And as to the latter you may well excuſe me, for your eyes will ſoon convince you who the miniſter is. Seek the divine preſence and aſſiſtance, and you will be laudably employed.

Civicus. I beg pardon my *Evangeliſta*, I underſtood not your honorable character till now; for you wear no cannonicals.

Evan. No pardon is wanted where no tranſgreſſion is committed; and as for the uſeleſs cannonicals, we leave to our neighbours, and covet only the ornaments of grace, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Civicus. I feel real pleaſure at this information, and like it all the better; for theſe are the ornaments which God approves, and that is beſt of all; but the other ornaments may be diſguſtful to him, for aught I know. But I hope now I am come to the Mountain of Myrrh, and the Hill of Frankincenſe; to be delighted with ſacred odours, and refreſhed with the good wine of the kingdom.

Evan. May it be proved to be ſo, by you, and all preſent.

Civicus is now put into a convenient fitting, and *Evangeliſta* retires to the Veſtry for a ſhort ſpace.—— Now he aſcends the Pulpit, and gives out the following

HYMN.

HYMN.

1 SOURCE of everlaſting love,
Send thine influence from above;
Now diffuſe thy grace abroad;
Raiſe our ſouls to thee, O God.
That with pleaſure we may taſte
The delicious goſpel feaſt:
Here let every waiting mind,
Soul-reviving comfort find.

2 Thine unchanging boundleſs love,
Sent the Saviour from above,
To redeem the guilty race,
Who had forfeited his grace:
For poor ſinners, ſuch as we,
Jeſus bled upon the tree.
Let us now by faith embrace
Chriſt, and all his goodneſs taſte.

3 This we know belongs to them,
Whom the Saviour did redeem;
They who feel the pow'r of grace
Drawing them to ſeek his face:
And we truſt this day to ſee,
We like them, now bleſt ſhall be;
And, adorn'd in his rich veſt,
Now ſhall eat the goſpel feaſt.

4 Bleſſed Saviour, let us be
Daily growing like to thee;
Till in glory we appear,
All its bleſſedneſs to ſhare:
And, while we are on the way,
Viſit us in love each day:
And, when we ſhall breathe our laſt,
Bring us to the heav'nly feaſt.

All the while the Hymn was ſinging, *Civicus* was ſolemnly attentive, and appear'd to be greatly delighted.

Evangeliſta now read one chapter out of the old teſtament, and another out of the new. During which time *Civicus* was all attention. Then *Evangeliſta* began his Prayer without any precompoſed form, and to the following effect.

THE PRAYER.

HEAVENLY Father, we approach thy gracious throne in the acceptable and all prevailing name of Jeſus, our great Mediator, and kind interceſſor; believing that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus: we offer our adorations and petitions to thee through him. We adore and worſhip thee, O Lord, as our creator, and kind and conſtant benefactor. Thou holdeſt our ſouls in life. Thy viſitation preſerves our ſpirits. To thee we now look for all that merciful and gracious aid, we ſtand in need of, at this time, to enable us to worſhip thee acceptably, with reverence and godly fear. We confeſs we have no worthineſs at all to plead before thee, for we are guilty and depraved creatures, both by nature and by practice. Our natures are corrupt, and our lives have been unholy, ever ſince we had a being. And it is to thy mercy alone, that we are indebted for our preſervation from ruin, from death and from hell. Our beſt performances are ſo much mixed with our ſinful infirmities, that we cannot ſay of any one of them, *behold this is pure.* We cannot boaſt of any goodneſs that we have done, or that we can do; but we muſt confeſs, our vileneſs and our guilt is ſuch, that we have not only made ourſelves ſinful and guilty, but have thereby rendered ourſelves weak and incapable of doing any thing to deſerve thy notice, or to ſave ourſelves. Our hearts are unclean, our words have been unholy, and our actions have been conſtant tranſgreſſions of thy holy and righteous law. Therefore, as ſinners condemned and ready to periſh, we come with the publican's prayer, *God be merciful to us ſinners.* O pardon our crimes, forgive our guilt, and ſhew every ſeeking ſinner now preſent, thy great ſalvation.

ſalvation. And any ſoul brought to a knowledge of himſelf and of thee, let ſuch now be enabled to behold thee as their God; and reveal to them thy covenant love, and let them read their title clear to manſions in the ſkies; and may thy peace fill their ſouls. Feed all thy children now preſent, with thy heavenly manna, and let them drink largely of the wine of thy kingdom. Strengthen the weak, comfort the feeble-minded, raiſe up the down-caſt, and deliver the tempted ſoul from the powed of the Adverſary. Reſtore backſliders, and ſuch as feel thy frown, and mourn thy abſence, let them now be favoured with thy ſmiles. Chace darkneſs from the doubtful, clear the views of the wavering, and confirm them in the full belief of thy truth. And let thoſe who are rejoicing in thee, be at thy feet in humility while their joys are increaſing. Convert the careleſs, and give repentance to the rebellious, and let ſinners of every deſcription now feel thy new creating power, and turn and live. To this end clothe thy word with the energy of thy Spirit, and let all preſent feel that God is with us of a truth. Give us a reviving ſeaſon, and ſhew us that this is to us thy time of love; and make this the beſt Sabbath to us that ever we enjoyed. Let the Speaker feel thine aſſiſtance, and do thou fill his ſoul with heavenly treaſure, and help him to give a word in ſeaſon to every ſoul, which ſhall be properly fitted to their every neceſſity, and well ſuited to their ſeveral caſes: thou knoweſt the wants of all, and thou canſt give a ſuitable portion of ſpiritual meat in due ſeaſon. To thee we now look for a full ſupply of all our real wants. Spirit of the Lord, breathe on theſe ſlain, that they may live, and then they ſhall live to thy glory. In like manner bleſs all the aſſemblies of thy ſaints, in every place throughout the world. May the divine influences be largely poured on all thy miniſters and people, The Lord bleſs them through all the earth. May God in his mercy look on the world lying in wickedneſs, and ſave them from the bondage of ſin and ſatan. Overturn the kingdom of hell in every part of the world, and let all men be ſpeedily freed from

from all its influence and injuries in every reſpect: and let thine own moſt bleſſed kingdom come, and thy will be done, on the earth, as it is in the heavenly world. Put an everlaſting end to war, and the ſhedding of human blood, and teach all men to live in unity, peace, and love. Let univerſal friendſhip bleſs the whole earth. May human governments be founded in righteouſneſs and true juſtice, all over the world. May our own be eſpecially ſo: and our country hereby become a happy nation. May our rulers, both ſupreme and ſubordinate, be men of God, men of juſtice, mercy, and faith. May the people be reformed and evangelized; and thy churches in our land be revived, edified, multiplied, and proſpered, and made to grow in grace, gifts, and numbers. May all the earth be bleſſed with the goſpel's joyful ſound. And may we and ours be all partakers of thy ſalvation. Let this be a penticoſtal ſeaſon to our ſouls, and a foretaſte of the bleſſedneſs of the heavenly world; and a pledge of our being brought thither, in thine own time and way. Pardon all our ſhort-comings, and bleſs us above all that we can aſk or think, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, who loved ſinners and died for them; and whom we worſhip, with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, the one living and true God, to whom be aſcribed the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever. *Amen.*

During prayer, there was a general ſolmenity and fervor, and *Civicus* appeared to be peculiarly cordial and devout.

They now ſung, to the praiſe of God again, the following

HYMN.

1 GREAT God, thy matchleſs nature is
A fountain of infinities!
Tranſcending thought! beyond the ſight
Of men, and all the worlds of light!

2 With thee is perfect holineſs,
And everlaſting life and bliſs;

Thy

Thy grace confers eternal joy,
On all who to the Saviour fly.

3 Moſt pure and holy is thy name,
Thy wonderous works are all the ſame;
Thy boundleſs grace hath depth and height,
Beyond all thought 'tis infinite!

4 Thy judgments are a mighty deep,
Thy juſtice does her reign ſtill keep:
When on thy foes thy terrors light,
Thy work is pure, thou doeſt right.

5 All things are preſent to thine eye,
Through time and to eternity;
Thy purpoſe fix'd, unmov'd remains;
And changeleſs are thy great deſigns.

6 Eternal King! thyſelf reveal;
Open to us thy written will.
Now while we at thy foot-ſtool ſit,
My we the heavenly manna eat.

THE SERMON.

LUKE, XV. 4, 5.

What man of you, having an hundred Sheep, if he loſe one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderneſs, and go after that which is loſt, until he find it, and when he hath found it, he layeth it on his ſhoulders rejoicing.

IN this chapter, it is evident, that our bleſſed Lord ſpeaks of his elect and redeemed people under the ſimilitude of Sheep;* and holds forth to us, their natural ſtate, under the idea of *loſt Sheep*. Now this is the exact ſimilitude of their ſtate and character, by nature and practice: they are a part of the great family of fallen *Adam*, and as ſuch, are ſtraying like loſt Sheep,

* John, x. 15.—26.

Sheep, as the reſt of mankind are. And, were they not ſought out, and brought back to the fold of Chriſt, by his own power and wiſdom, they would wander eternally, and never find their way to happineſs or heaven. But, being the objects of the Father's choice, they are likewiſe of the Son's redemption, and they muſt therefore become the habitation of God the Spirit. For, as a Shepherd who has a flock of Sheep, compoſed of a certain, ſpecific, and definite number, ſo are theſe. And as the Shepherd knows well if but one of his Sheep is miſſing; and as he ſets a value on them all, he will ſend and fetch the one that is gone aſtray, and cauſe it to be again incorporated with the flock, and again to reſt in the ſame fold; juſt ſo it is with Chriſt and his ſtraying Sheep. Only this is to be noticed here, the parable ſpeaks of an individual Sheep, but the individual is the emblem of all the whole flock of Chriſt, for they have all gone aſtray without exception. And therefore, the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls, has undertaken to find every one of them himſelf: And that this may be fully effected, he has, in the firſt inſtance, redeemed them by his own moſt precious blood, from the hand of ſin-avenging juſtice,* and the curſe of a broken law,‡ under which by their ſin they had fallen. And now being redeemed, they are his own peculiar property. Therefore he calls them emphatically *his Sheep*. And they are his by the Father's donation, and his own purchaſe; therefore they are his, both by power and purchaſe. And this being the caſe, he will have every one of them. *All* that the Father giveth me,§ ſays he, *ſhall come* to me, &c. The price of his blood, then, ſhall be the jewels of his crown, and that crown he ſhall eternally wear; and the joys of his kingdom *they* ſhall eternally ſhare. And, though infidels may laugh, and the phariſees may murmur and rail; now as well as of old; yet the ſheep of Chriſt are ſafe; nor ſhall any one of them fail of that inheritance‖ to which they are choſen. But

* Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14.—Heb. x. 12.
‡ Gal. iii. 12.
§ John, 6.—37.
‖ John, x. 26, 27.

But, for order's ſake, I intend to ſpeak on my text in the following way.

I. Notice the compaſſion of the great Shepherd.

II. Obſerve the ſtate and condition of his Sheep.

III. Notice the joy of the Shepherd, at the recovery and reſtoration of his Sheep.

Firſt then, I am to notice the compaſſion of the great Shepherd. And here I muſt ſay, it is the compaſſion of a God. Yes, our great Shepherd is alſo the everlaſting God,* the maker of all things, the preſerver of all things, and the judge of quick and dead.† And therefore, he doth in heaven and on earth whatever pleaſeth him. He has all power in his hands, and therefore, if his love reſolves to bleſs, his power is able to effect and confirm the grace. The compaſſion of our divine Shepherd, muſt therefore, be infinite. We, who are the Sheep of his paſture, have a Shepherd who has boundleſs compaſſion. And though millions of redeemed ſouls have been drinking of this fountain for ages and generations ſucceſſively, they have not leſſened it a ſingle grain, and when unnumbered millions more ſhall have drunk at it to eternal ages, this compaſſion ſhall remain the very ſame as when it was manifeſted to the firſt redeemed ſoul. For our Jeſus is the ſame, yeſterday, to-day, and forever.‡ And his divine compaſſion is an infinite ocean without bottom or ſhore; it can neither be exhauſted nor leſſened; no, not to eternity. But as it *was*, it is *now*, and *ever will be*, the *fountain* of living waters, that cannot poſſibly be diminiſhed one ſingle drop, though unnumbered millions are eternally drinking at it! They drink, and never ceaſe, but are conſtantly drawing from it full draughts of perfect pleaſure. And this compaſſion has fixed upon *you*, ye *ſin-ſick ſouls*! It has made *you* its objects and therefore *every one of you* will be by it made forever happy. And this happineſs ſhall be *ever growing*, *without leſſening*

* John, i. 1, 2, 3. † Rom. xiv. 10, 11, 12.
‡ Heb. xiii. 8.

leſſening the fountain that feeds it. Think of this and be glad. All other ſupplies waſte the original, but this is a fountain of infinite ſtore, which cannot be diminiſhed, no not in the ſmalleſt degree. Oh ! how rich then, are all they who are repleniſhed from hence ! And what a ſuperlative miſery, not to be acquainted with it ! But you who have juſt begun to ſet out in the divine life, ſee to what a *fair* and *full* inheritence you are born : and it is reſerved in heaven for you, and ye are kept by the power of God, and comforted by the way with delightful and refreſhing draughts, till at laſt ye ſhall all come to enjoy the full poſſeſſion. Oh ! then, lift up your eyes and ſee the fair country to which you are going, and let your hearts and voices ſing for joy, in the ſweeteſt notes of love and praiſe, for your perfect bleſſedneſs draweth nigh. Let not any one ſay, that his caſe is too bad for him to be made acquainted with the ſweets of divine compaſſion ; for that cannot be ; becauſe, the ſin and guilt of the *very worſt living*, or that *ever lived*, is but *finite*, and produced by the power of a creature, who is vaſtly limited in his powers : but divine compaſſion is infinite in its nature, and boundleſs in its duration. There is, therefore, no room for doubt or diſcouragement, but matter of joy and praiſe, for every one who feel his want of it. But in the next place,

2. I would obſerve, that the compaſſion of our great Shepherd, is as free as it is full ; it is not to be purchaſed by human merit, but it reſpects thoſe only who have nothing to bring.* The poorer the wretch, the welcomer gueſt : the undone and loſt, are the objects of its benevolence, for its deſigns are to make poor ſinners rich, and miſerable ſinners happy. Proud phariſees are rejected, as the whole tenor of this context will ſhew ; but poor publicans, who feel they are ſuch, are its welcome gueſts : therefore, no repenting ſinner need fear, for our good Shepherd will caſt out none of his ſtraying ones, who wiſh to return.

* Iſaiah, liv. 1, 2.

return. All who come begging an intereſt in his free favour are ſure to find the moſt cordial welcome, and the arms of his compaſſion are ever open to receive them. And thoſe who come, are cleanſed in the fountain it has opened for ſin and uncleanneſs; the filthieſt are purified, and the guiltieſt are freely and fully pardoned and juſtified. His compaſſion invites the moſt ſinful of the human race, to come and partake freely of full juſtification, free pardon, adoption, and ſanctification, and complete and eternal happineſs. Let me now give you a very ſuitable verſe in this place.

Come needy, come guilty,
Come loathſome and bare;
You can't come too filthy,
Come juſt as you are. HART.

This is certainly a true, and very evangelic verſe; therefore I quoted it here, as a ſuitable illuſtration of what I have been ſaying above. It contains the very nature of the goſpel invitation to poor ſinners, and is expreſſive of that compaſſion of which I have been ſpeaking. And be aſſured that Jeſus ſends this invitation to every one of you now preſent, who are wiſhing to partake of the benefits of his ſalvation. Stay away no longer then, but come now, and partake of the riches of infinite compaſſion. But in the next place,

3. It is changeleſs compaſſion. Thoſe who are now the objects of its benevolence ſhall remain ſuch forever. It is not a temporary regard that it pays to its objects, but it is eternal life which it gives them, and they ſhall *never periſh*, ſays our divine Shepherd. The deſigns which this compaſſion forms reſpecting any one of *Adam's* fallen family, remain the ſame from eternity to eternity, and the bleſſing it beſtows is *everlaſting life*; nor can they be diſ-inherited by any power or adverſary whatever. Therefore your fears of falling into perdition by ſome adverſary or other, are all groundleſs. Ye weak believers; ye Lambs of his fold are as dear to him as the Sheep of his paſture; for

for to him, the weakeſt is dear as the ſtrong. This may well comfort the tempted and the tried among the Redeemer's family: and indeed, theſe grand truths are held forth in the Scriptures for this very purpoſe; that the weak may be ſtrengthened, the fearful comforted, the ſorrowful have conſolation adminiſtered to them, and that the tempted may become victorious. Therefore, let the weak ſay, I am ſtrong; and the faint-hearted lift up their heads with joy. For the begun life of God in your ſouls, muſt and will be carried on, and completed by the ſame hand which firſt infuſed it, or wrought it in you. What elſe does the Apoſtle mean, when he ſays, *He that hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt.** And he ſays, he is *confident* of this very thing, and the weakeſt believer may be as confident as he; it is only his remaining unbelief that keeps him from it. But the *Day of Chriſt* here ſpoken of, what *day* is it, to which the Apoſtle refers us? I anſwer, in my opinion, it is the *laſt Judgment*, i. e. when he ſhall come to judge the quick and the dead; then ſhall all the Saints be brought forth to public view, and then and there be owned of their great Shepherd, as the purchaſe of his blood; as the regenerate race, who have continued with Chriſt in his temptations, and then he will appoint unto them the full poſſeſſion of the everlaſting Kingdom† of purity and peace. But perhaps ſome may ſtart an

Objection here, and ſay, is not the work of grace in the ſoul of a beliver completed, when the ſpirit is taken to glory at death? I anſwer, there is certainly a meetneſs for glory imparted to the ſoul of every believer, prior to its enterance into that bleſſed world: but all the deſigns of grace to any believer, are not finiſhed, till the body is at laſt raiſed from the dead, and faſhioned like unto Chriſt's moſt glorious body, in the great reſurrection. Then all the bodies of the ſaints which have been buried, from *Abel* to the laſt that ſhall be interred, ſhall be raiſed from their beds of

* Phil. i. 6. † Luke, xii. 32.—Matt. xxv. 34.

of duſt; death muſt be deſtroyed, and the grave loſe its prey; and every redeemed body, as well as every redeemed ſpirit, muſt partake of the *Redeemer's likeneſs*, as well as of his heavenly kingdom. But this *cannot be* till the *laſt elect ſoul* is called and prepared for his heavenly kingdom and immortality. And all the ſaints, living at that time, as well as all thoſe who have lived from the beginning of time, and departed ſince in the faith, *will then*, and *not till then*, be fully prepared for, confirmed in, and taken to a bleſſed immortality, both in body and ſoul. And this will be the completion of the preparatory deſign of divine grace in believers, and *nothing ſhort of it*. But this deſign *muſt* and *does* go forward, till all is done. Conſequently, the *Day of Chriſt*, referred to in this text, is the day of the laſt great Judgment and reſurrection of the dead. But in the next place,

4. This compaſſion is all-reſtoring compaſſion,* and happy for backſliding ſouls, that it is; I can ſpeak with *confidence* here, both from the word of God, and *my own experience*. David ſaith, he reſtoreth my ſoul. And another Prophet ſaith, return ye backſliding ſouls, for I am married unto you, ſaith the Lord.† And I can ſay, to my own ſhame, I have known what it is to backſlide; and I believe I can ſay alſo, I have known (through grace) what it is to be reſtored. Therefore, without heſitation, I ſay, 'tis *all-reſtoring* compaſſion. There may be ſome preſent who have backſlidden, and in conſequence of that, are now ſorrowing as men without hope. But, for the comfort of ſuch, let us notice here, that *back-ſliding* is not *final apoſtacy*; and that *nothing but final apoſtacy can ruin the ſoul*. Therefore, though you may have been ſuffered to have backſlidden *much*, and *openly* too, and have in conſequence been brought into darkneſs and mourning for a long time, yet caſt not away that ſecret hope which you may yet feel, for though ye are now dark in mind, yet the all-reſtoring light ſhall come, which ſhall fill you with joy and gladneſs, and again

* Pſalm, xxiii. 3. & cxlv. 14 † Jer. iii. 22.

again felicitate your ſpirits. The Lord may make you feel the ſmart of broken bones, and cauſe you to feel all the pains of ſo diſtreſſing a ſtate: yet, remember, that his love is ſtill the ſame, and that he hates putting away; and therefore will not put away the backſlider who returns to him. He ſays to ſuch, *Take with you words, and return unto the Lord, and he will receive you graciouſly and love you freely.*‡ He knew well what you would be, and that you would turn aſide in the manner you have done, but that knowledge hindered not his eternal choice, and this offence of yours, ſhall not break off his love in time. Therefore, backſliding ſoul, think thus with thyſelf; the Lord does all this to make thee *loath* thy ſin, and thyſelf on account of thy ſin. But his love to thee is *ſtill as great*; Jeſus remembers Calvary, and do not thou forget; thy ſoul was redeemed by that precious blood which was there ſhed, to take away thy ſin. Thy ſoul is ſtill the *purchaſe of blood divine*, and being ſo, ſoon in glory thou ſhalt reign, in robes as pure and reſplendent as any of the happy inhabitants there. This is the concluſion that mourning backſliders ſhould make, and not give way to deſpair and doubt; the victory is not to be won by *doubting* and *deſpair*, but by *faith* in the Saviour's *love* and *grace*. Therefore, mourning backſlider, be not faithleſs but believing.

Objection. But perhaps you will ſay, my backſliding is attended with ſuch peculiar aggravations, that I cannot believe ſuch a ſinner as I can be reſtored, or that pardoning mercy can ever be ſhewn to one ſo vile as I. *Anſw.* It is *not poſſible* for any but the *wilful* and *finally impenitent*, to be too great a ſinner to be pardoned. The greateſt of this ſort of criminals have been reſtored and pardoned, as is manifeſt from many examples in ſcripture; and therefore, *you* may; for Chriſt's love is ſtill as great, and his blood *now* cleanſeth from *all ſin*; *that* ſin, as well as any other. Therefore, ſay not, ye cannot be reſtored, for ſurely ye may. Caſt not away, therefore, the hope and confidence in reſtoring mercy, which before this you may have had, but

‡ Hoſea, xiv. 2

but lay hold of it, believing in it, and depending on it.

Objection. But perhaps ſome may ſay, I have brought a *public reproach* on the goſpel, and the ways of God; I, therefore, can have no right to hope; or if I might, I ſhould be *aſhamed* to aſſociate with the people of God, becauſe I have diſgraced his ways, and become a reproach to them, and they will always *look on me* with an *evil eye.*

Anſwer. What then, becauſe you have taken *ſome* wrong ſteps, are you determined to take yet more *fatal ones?* True, it is matter of great grief and lamentation, that you ſhould have thus fallen; but remember you can never mend the matter by your unbelief, nor by your ſtaying from the aſſemblies of the ſaints; but by cheriſhing hope, ye will renew your courage, and be enabled to overcome *ſinful ſhame*, and to appear again among the ſaints. And remember, every *ſelf-knowing* and *Chriſt-loving* ſoul, will rejoice at your reſtoration, and be glad with all their hearts at your recovery. And beſides, your ſtaying away, only deepens the wounds already made in your ſoul, and on the ways of God. But your recovery will be a mean of wiping away that reproach, and of reſtoring peace and proſperity to your mind, and ye may be an inſtrument of good to others in ſimilar circumſtances. This is by no means impoſſible. Remember it therefore, and take courage; and for your comfort, venture to believe, that divine compaſſion can reſtore and heal you, and manifeſt to you how greatly it can pardon.* And nothing hinders but your ſtaying at a diſtance. Oh! therefore, *return! return!* and Jeſus will receive you.

Objection. But perhaps another may ſay, I have ſinned ſo *repeatedly* againſt the *cleareſt light*, and the *greateſt mercy*, that I cannot hope. I anſwer, the ſins of all backſliders are againſt light, and againſt mercy, and yet backſliders are invited to return to the Lord, and

* Pſalm ciii. 8.—12.—17.

and he promiſes to heal them; and tells them, *he is married to them*, and that, *he hates putting away*. It is manifeſt, none need object, or be objected to, who deſire to return. Thoſe *only* who are determined to revolt more and more, and who have no wiſh or deſire to return, have every thing to fear: theſe may well fear the moſt tremendous curſes of the Almighty. But thoſe who loath their ſin, and long to return, ſhall ſurely find mercy. The Lord calls them his children, and commands them to return, and tells them he will receive them graciouſly, reſtore comforts to them, and love them freely. Not that he *hates* them now, it is their *ſin* that he hates. Nor that he *now begins* to love them: no, that was from everlaſting, but he re-manifeſts his free and eternal love. Beſides, the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from *all ſin*. From all ſin without exception, and therefore every ſpieces of backſliding, as well as other ſins, are purged away by this precious ſin-cleanſing blood. Therefore, no returning back-ſlider has any reaſon to fear a rejection.

But I come now to another part of my ſubject, which is,

Second, to notice the ſtate and condition of the Sheep.

And in the firſt place, under this head, I obſerve; that their condition, naturally, is a corrupt and degenerate one. They, as well as all others, are the guilty offspring of fallen Adam, and are by nature children of wrath, even as others.† It is evident then, that the natural ſtate of Chriſt's Sheep, is equally as bad as that of other men. And indeed it muſt be ſo, for they are the degenerate branches of a degenerate vine; for ſuch as the vine is, ſuch will the branches be. And, alas! we have no need of a courſe of arguments to prove this truly awful fact, for the conduct of them all, till divinely renewed, ſufficiently proves this. We conclude, therefore, on the cleareſt evidence, that all the people of God themſelves, are by nature, in a ſtate of ſin; in a corrupt and guilty ſtate, and their nature is of itſelf, as unholy and impure as that of all other men,

† Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3.

men, or as that of thoſe who die in ſin, and are eternally loſt. It is paſt all doubt, that all men by nature, are alike guilty and corrupt; thoſe who are called by grace, as well as thoſe who are left to periſh in their ſin. Conſequently,

2. Their natural ſtate is not only a corrupt and guilty one, but it muſt alſo be a *curſed* one. The very nature of the thing will evince this; for the curſe follows guilt, as naturally as darkneſs follows the departure of the ſun's rays, and as certainly as the night ſucceeds the day. Therefore the Apoſtle ſays to the Galations, that *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a curſe for us.* For *us*, who by converting grace are now taught to believe in him who redeemed *us*. The believers at Galatia, and all believers in the world, are by nature under the curſe, but redeemed from it by the blood of Chriſt. The curſe of the law fell on all men alike, in conſequence of the firſt ſin, and the redemption which is in Chriſt, is alike in its benefits, on all who believe. All thoſe in whom ſinful nature rules, are *alike under the curſe*, and thoſe in whom grace rules, it reigns in them to eternal life, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. For, if the people of God had not been under the curſe by nature, they had not needed a redeemer to reſcue them from that curſe. It is evident then, that the curſe of the law, in conſequence of ſin, has fallen on *all* Adam's offspring alike, and without exception, for Chriſt died to redeem his people from the curſe. But I will ſay, in the next place,

3. It is a wandering and ſtraying ſtate. Men are all gone out of the way, and they do nothing but go farther and farther, till all-powerful grace calls them back from their wanderings, and a divine change is wrought in them, and they are ſubdued by heavenly grace. They ſtop not in their wanderings till born from above, or cut off in their ſins. This is the caſe of all. Hence the various rounds of diſſipation among the carnal world; their revels and routs, their cards, dice, public amuſements, and I know not what; an endleſs

endleſs round of one ſort or other of vain and criminal diverſions, to try to make themſelves happy. But all theſe purſuits are vain and unavailing, becauſe they lead them from God inſtead of bringing them to him; and only prove how much they are diſpoſed to wander from the right way. So likewiſe, if we notice the various falſe doctrines, and lying pretences, which have been made by men of corrupt minds, who have taught that they only are in the right faith, and have condemned all others who differ from them; but who, nevertheleſs, have taught ſome of the vileſt abſurdites that a depraved mind could utter. And many of them having begun to wander from the truth they formerly ſeemed to embrace, never ceaſe wandering till they have ſtrayed through all the various ſyſtems of deluſion and error which deceived men have propagated, till at laſt they turn deiſts, and end in apoſtacy; caſting of all pretences to religion. This alſo ſerves to ſhew that men are naturally wanderers from God, and will remain ſo for ever, except divine grace renew them. This mortifying doctrine is as applicable to Chriſt's Sheep before their converſion, as to any others of mankind; for they, as well as others, wander till Chriſt calls them back, and puts them into his own fold. But I remark,

4. It is alſo a miſerable ſtate.* Men naturally think they are, in a religious ſenſe, rich and increaſed in goods; though, alas! this only proves their ſpiritual poverty, for they are poor, and wretched, and blind and naked, and know it not: and this ignorance is a prolific ſource of miſery; and by it they are out of the way of true happineſs, though they vainly ſuppoſe they are in it. Conſequently, they are ever purſuing it, where it can never be found; they ſpend their time and ſtrength, and property alſo, for nought, and in vain. They are ever labouring, only to increaſe their miſery. Their ignorance of the right way to real felicity, is a mean of puffing them up with wrong notions and vain conceits. They know nothing as they ought

* Rom. iii. 16.—Rev. iii. 17.

ought to know, and their pride will not ſuffer them to be inſtructed, they conceit they know as well as any of their neighbours, and their ſuppoſed knowledge leads them perpetually wrong: their imagined light is darkneſs, and by it they are drawn into greater miſery, in theſe very ways in which they vainly expect to find happineſs. This their way is their folly, and their folly makes them tranſgreſſors, and the way of tranſgreſſors is hard. Yea, ſuch is their mental blindneſs, that they account true wiſdom madneſs, and the way to heaven the road to infelicity and diſhonor; and this leads them into everlaſting diſappointment. Therefore, in this ſad ſtate, they can never know peace, though they ever ſeek it, they never find it, becauſe they ſeek it where it can never be found. this is truly a miſerable ſtate: but miſerable as it is, it is the very condition of all mere natural men; for all the ſons of fallen Adam are born in this condition, and in it they remain, till God is pleaſed of his own goodneſs to bring them out of it, and to turn their feet into the way of peace. Conſequently,

5. They are, while in a ſtate of nature, in the worſt of bondage, even a ſlavery to their luſts, they are tied and bound with the chains of their ſins :† and theſe, alas! are ſtrong chains indeed! But ſinners being out of the way of life and peace, muſt be perpetually going farther and farther in the road to everlaſting wretchedneſs. And to this they are impelled by the impetuoſity of their corrupt propenſities; and theſe make them the willing ſlaves of their grand Adverſary: and thus their chains are rivetted on them by their own corrupt inclinations. And alas! they prove at laſt, that no ſlaves are ſo ſlaviſh, as thoſe who put on their own fetters. But this is the ſlavery of all thoſe who are governed by their luſts, and none are free from their influence, but thoſe who are born again of the divine Spirit. Therefore, this miſerable condition is the ſtate of all natural men.

But

† Prov. v. 22, 23.

But this brings me to my *third* propoſition; which is To notice the joy of the great Shepherd at the recovery of his Sheep. And here I would obſerve, that when God is ſaid to rejoice, and alſo, when he is ſaid to repent, in ſcripture, we are not to imagine that he is ſuſceptible of any new ideas, or any additional happineſs, or any change of mind, as we are. But when he is ſaid to rejoice at any thing, we are to conceive, that the thing he is ſaid to rejoice in, is agreeable to his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. Not that he can receive any degrees of new felicity, or make any alteration in his infinite purpoſe and deſign; no, for he is in *one mind*,‡ and who can turn him? and what his ſoul deſireth *even that* he doeth. His purpoſe ſtands eternally, and he does as he pleaſes, in heaven above, and on earth beneath.§ Therefore, when he is ſaid to rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, we ſhould conceive that it is agreeable to his good pleaſure, that ſinners ſhould turn and live. And that he views the happineſs of his people with infinite complacency and delight: but we ſhould never forget, that this is no new thing with him, and that he will never know more of this, than he did from eternity. So, when he is ſaid to repent that he had made man, &c. we ſhould conceive, that human wickedneſs is infinitely deteſtable in the ſight of the Almighty, and his repenting of his making men, is deſigned to ſignify his determination to puniſh them for their crimes; and this determination is not formed on any new diſcovery, but is *for ever* the ſame. For all things and all events are ever perfectly before him; but in condeſcenſion to our weak ideas, he is ſaid to rejoice at the converſion of ſinners; to ſhew us the more clearly and fully *his complacency* in the happineſs of his repenting creatures, who had revolted from him. And no doubt, the Holy Ghoſt ſaw good to adopt this mode of ſpeaking, to aid our conceptions in contemplating this ſublime truth, and to help us to conceive this grand idea of him, that his delights from eternity* were in contemplating the happineſs of believing ſinners. And

‡ Job, xxiii. 13. § Pſalm, xxxiii. 11. * Prov. viii. 31

And oh! what a wonder of wonders is this! The infinite God contrives the reſtoration and everlaſting happineſs of revolted rebellious worms, who can render him no recompence, and who had deſerved his infinite indignation! But it pleaſes him to love them freely, and to take pleaſure in making them happy, who had made themſelves miſerable by their own iniquity.

Let us, therefore, who feel his love, comfort ourſelves and one another with this thought, that our heavenly Father ever was, and ever will be delighted with the converſion and ſalvation of believing ſinners. And that this delight of his, is infinite, eternal, and immutable; for it is the delight of Deity. The converſion of ſouls then, muſt be a very important thing indeed; for if God takes delight in it, this at once ſtamps an importance on it, that all language would fail to deſcribe; and ſhews us, that he values a ſoul beyond all the material creation: and indeed, this is very evident, both by the words and works of our bleſſed Saviour; for he tells us, *God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life.** And the bleſſed Jeſus gave his life for his Sheep, and that of his own free choice,† for he choſe to redeem them by his own moſt precious blood, and for this end, voluntarily laid down his life for them, and took it again. He tells us, no man could take it from him, but he laid it down of himſelf, *i. e.* he ſuffered his adverſaries to do it, for the above purpoſe; even to ranſom his church and ſave his people: and to ſhew us, that the whole material creation is not half ſo valuable to him as the ſalvation of his people; for he prizes their ſouls above his human life. All this proclaims to us, that he ſets a high value, yea, an *infinite value* on his people; and that, therefore, he is infinitely pleaſed with their happineſs. This is ſignified to us by the laying of the ſtrayed Sheep on the ſhoulders rejoicing, when found; and by that ſaying, that there is joy in heaven over one ſinner that repents.

But

* John, iii. 16. † John, x. 17, 18.

But this amazing kindneſs of our Lord has ſtamped a dignity on his people, which ſurmounts our conceptions, and ſurpaſſes our powers to deſcribe. To ſhew us a little of it, we are told, *they are his workmanſhip*;‡ conſequently, they are, what David ſays they are, *the excellent of the earth.** And therefore, their Lord delights in them, having made them comely by his own comelineſs which he has put upon them. He draws his own image on them, in their regeneration, and then looks on them with approbation and divine delight; and makes them happy in the enjoyment of his manifeſted love.

2. From hence, it is fairly inferable, that the work of the Chriſtian miniſtry is a *great work*, a *good work*, and the *work of God.* For it is appointed to be a mean of winning ſouls to him; and it muſt be an *important* work, which is to effect ſuch great purpoſes. Truly then, does the ſcripture ſay, *he that winneth ſouls is wiſe.* But if the preaching of the Goſpel be ſo important, it cannot, I think, be the ſpot of God's children, to live in the neglect of it, much leſs to deſpiſe it. For God never appointed that which is uſeleſs in his church; but it is clear as the light, that he has appointed the preaching of his word in his church; therefore, thoſe who wilfully neglect or deſpiſe it when they might enjoy it, pour contempt on divine wiſdom and goodneſs. Let the guilty conſider this matter moſt ſeriouſly, and let them lay to heart the many neglects of this kind, of which they are juſtly chargeable, and humble themſelves before God on account of theſe their ſad defects. For let them aſſure themſelves, they will be called to the bar of God, to give an account for this another day. 'Tis the wiſeſt way, therefore, to repent of, and forſake ſuch neglects now, and to prize and obſerve what God has appointed to make us wiſe and happy. But in the next place,

3. It is plain, that chriſtian miniſters are Chriſt's under Shepherds, § ſent forth by him to be inſtrumental

‡ Eph. ii. 10. * Pſalm, xvi. iii.
§ II. Cor. viii. 23.—Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.—Mark, xvi. 20.

tal in his hand, to bring his ſcattered Sheep to his fold; and alſo to feed them in the green paſtures of divine ordinances, and with the doctrines of the glorious goſpel. Not with the huſks which ſwine eat, but with the manna which came down from heaven. And it is a certain matter of fact, that a genuine goſpel miniſtry is an ineſtimable bleſſing. I will not ſay, the Lord cannot ſave his people without it, but I ſee he does not; at leaſt it is far from being his general way of doing it, a ſolitary inſtance or two may have occurred, in which a very few have been awakened without the preached word: but when this has been the caſe, they have been then taught to prize the word, to attend the preaching of it, and have been fed and nouriſhed by it, to life everlaſting. To have a ſound and ſavory miniſtry among any people, is to have the honor of an embaſſy from the King of Heaven, and it is an happy omen, that he intends to bring many ſinners to aſk his pardon, and to beſtow it on them, in ſuch a ſociety. But,

4. If Deity itſelf delight in the converſion of ſouls; and if there is joy in heaven over one repenting ſinner, how ought we to rejoice at the converſion of our fellow creatures; and with what readineſs and pleaſure ſhould we do every thing in our power to encourage and comfort them? The Adverſary is vigilant enough to diſcourage and diſtreſs them, and throw every ſtumbling-block in their way, which he poſſibly can; and ſurely we ſhould be as vigilant to counteract his devices; and, as much as in us lies, to hold up their hands, and the hands of all thoſe who are making laudable efforts to bring ſouls unto God. And to comfort and encourage thoſe who have ſet out on their way to heaven: and as we may have opportunity and ability, let us provoke them to love and to good works. And let us remember, that no work of faith or labour of love, that we are enabled to engage in, ſhall ever be entirely in vain; ſome good ſhall certainly ariſe from it, either to ourſelves or others, or both. May this thought have its due weight with us, and ſtir us up to all proper activity: But in the next place,

5 If

5. If Jehovah ſets ſuch a value on ſouls, how ſhould we long and pray for their converſion? And not only for the converſion of our friends and neighbours; but alſo, that this bleſſed work may diffuſe itſelf all over the earth, and that the goſpel may ſpread from pole to pole, with the rapidity of lightning, and be as awakening in its effects, as the loudeſt peals of thunder. And let us never forget (as is the manner of ſome) that the grand mean of converting ſouls, is the *preaching of the goſpel.** Our Lord has graciouſly appointed it for this end and purpoſe; therefore, it becomes us to bethink ourſelves what we may do to promote the preaching of it, and to act accordingly. Let the men of property do what they can to procure goſpel preaching, for thoſe places where there is none. Let them encourage perſons who are bleſt with piety and talents, to engage in this important work. And thoſe happy men who are thus qualified by our divine maſter, engage in evangelizing with all their hearts, knowing that the talents which are given them, were imparted for the good of others as well as themſelves. And let thoſe happy men who are truly pious, but not gifted for public work, nor favored with worldly property, encourage thoſe who are, both with their preſence and their prayers. Example has a mighty effect, and how far this may ſucceed we cannot tell, till we have fairly tried it. But in the next place,

6. If the Lord ſets ſuch a value on the ſouls of men, ought we not to ſet a higher value on our own ſouls than we have done?† And to mind heavenly things more than we do? This, I think, muſt be evident to all who love Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity. Are there not too many of us who are more concerned about worldly good, than there are about the ſalvation of their ſouls? This, I think, is juſtly to be feared, nay, it is very evident that it is ſo. But what egregious folly is this? It may in ſome meaſure be depicted by the conduct of the Ideot who prefers *pebbles* and *rattles* to a vaſt treaſure

* Mark, xvi. 15 to 17.—Acts, ii. 37.—Rom. x. 17.

† Matt, xvi. 26.

treaſure of *gold.* This is enough (one would think) to make us aſhamed of ſuch ſtupid conduct; may we learn to be wiſer, leſt we *pick* our *dying pillows* with *thorns*; and wiſh when *too late*, that we had preferred that *moſt*, which would ſupport us *beſt*, when fleſh and heart faileth us. But moreover,

7. If God rejoices in the converſion of ſinners, what ſubſtantial ground of rejoicing have they who are truly converted. Surely none on earth have ſuch ſolid reaſon to rejoice as they have; well, therefore, may the Apoſtle ſay to believers, *rejoice in the Lord always, and again I ſay, rejoice.** Oh! my believing brethren, you have occaſion to ſing for joy, for the Lord of all loves you, with an infinite and an everlaſting love,† and reigns over you to do you good. He has given you his grace, and will give you glory‡ alſo, for the former ſecures the latter; and in your way thither, he will give you every good thing. And he has engaged to make all things work together for your good§ while here, and to bring you to everlaſting bliſs in heaven. Therefore, it becomes you to be joyful, yea, to ſing for joy of heart, and to praiſe our gracious Lord with joyful lips. Let the vain world be convinced by your chearfulneſs, that religion is not a gloomy and melancholy thing, as they have falſely ſuppoſed, but that it is, in truth and reality, the moſt pleaſant and joyous thing in the world. And that the moſt pure and refined pleaſures reſult from it. It makes us happy in life, under all its trials and preſſures, and more than that, it makes us triumphant in death, and then introduces our ſouls into the bliſsful regions of eternal glory. Surely then, the chriſtian is the happy, the holy, and the moſt courageous perſon. A holy fortitude is given him under all circumſtances, and a real dignity is put upon him in all conditions. May the Lord give us all to ſhare more and more abundantly of this religion in our hearts and lives.

But I have a word or two more to ſay to careleſs unconverted

* Phil. iv. 4. † Jer. xxxi. 3. ‡ Pſalm, lxxxiv. 11.
§ Rom. viij. 28.

unconverted ſinners. You who know nothing of the pleaſures of religion, but are ſeeking your gratification in the forbidden paths of ſin; let me aſk you, as in the preſence of God, did you ever find that pleaſure you are ſeeking after in the ways of ſin, on which your hearts are ſet? Your own conſciences ſay, *no*, we never did. This is the anſwer which conſcience gives, and ſurely it is a true one, as to the paſt, and it will be equally ſo in future. For as you never did find pleaſure in your vicious ways, ſo you never will. It is not poſſible that you ſhould, for the curſe of the great God reſts on all the wicked, and on all their wicked ways, and this will ever mar your carnal pleaſures: and if ye never repent and turn to God, ye muſt lie down in eternal pain. But let us exhort you in the words of the Prophet, *Let the wicked forſake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.** Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be as wool; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be whiter than ſnow. Returning ſinners need not fear a refuſal, for the Lord declares he will accept them graciouſly, and pardon them freely. Jeſus caſts out none who come to him, *no, not on any account*, either for preſent or paſt ſins; they are no objection, for he freely forgives *all ſins* that any returning ſinner is chargeable with. They are the perverſe, obſtinate, and unbelieving, who reſolve to preſiſt in their crimes, who have every thing to fear. But the vileſt of the vile‡ may obtain pardon and eternal life, by coming to Chriſt; for he never rejects any who come to him, nor will he ever do ſo. Come, therefore, to the Saviour, and his gracious arms will embrace you, and his everlaſting love will enrich you, and make you happy for time and eternity. May the Lord, in the infinity of his mercy, make us all thus wiſe to ſalvation, and happy for ever in the Saviour's love. *Amen.*

HYMN

* Iſaiah, lv. 7 ‡ Mark, iii. 28, & ii. 17.—I. Tim. i. 15

HYMN AFTER SERMON.

1 JESUS, thou Almighty Saviour,
Call thy wand'ring ſin-ſick Sheep,
From their roving baſe behaviour,
And their ſouls in ſafety keep
From each evil
Which beſets their every ſtep.

2 Call the ſtraying from the mazes
Of their dark benighted way;
E'er the world and Satan ſeizes
On them, as an eaſy prey.
Mighty Shepherd!
Make thy wand'ring Sheep obey.

3 Souls yet dead in ſin, now quicken,
By thy all-enliv'ning word;
With remorſe may they be ſtricken,
And now call upon the Lord,
Make them hearken
To thy gracious goſpel word.

4 Now may heav'n have cauſe for ſhouting,
And thy church partake the joy,
To ſee Jeſus, Satan routing,
And his empire now deſtroy.
Now may ſinners,
O'er the earth, thy call obey.

5 Now may miniſters and people,
Feel thy vivifying power;
Riſe and tread down ev'ry evil;
And begin from this glad hour,
To ſhine Godlike!
Till their ſouls all ſin o'erpower.

6 Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
Shine on ev'ry doubting heart.

Let them ſee, through Jeſu's merit,
Thou doſt to their ſouls impart
Life eternal,
And that thou their father art.

THE CONCLUDING PRAYER.

O THOU Father of ſpirits and God of ſalvation, we thank thee for this delightful opportunity, which thou haſt afforded us; and would now moſt earneſtly beg thy divine bleſſing may reſt on thy word which has been delivered, and on the ſouls of all who have heard it. May thine own children be refreſhed and nouriſhed by thy truth, as by the moſt delicious wine, and fed as by the bread of heaven. Cauſe them hereby to grow in every grace, till they are crowned with glory. Command an entrance for thy word into the hearts of ſinners, let it penetrate their ſpirits, and lead them to the Saviour. May not thy word be a ſavor of death unto death to any of us, but, if agreeable to thy moſt holy will, of life unto life to us all. Pardon whatever thy pure eyes have ſeen amiſs in either of us, and let us now depart with thy chearing bleſſing; and at laſt bring us to thy courts above, to praiſe and enjoy thee for ever. Be with us when we meet again in thy name; and let us this day be crowned with thy peculiar favor. We beg every mercy, in the great Redeemer's Name. *Amen.*

And now may the ſaving Grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the peculiar and ſpecial Love of the divine Father, and the comforting communion of the Holy Ghoſt, be with each of us, and all who love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, now and for ever. *Amen.*

(Thus ends the morning ſervice.)

After a ſmall pauſe *Evangeliſta* deſcends, and the people begin to diſperſe, and return to their homes. But the pious perſons who remarked the ſolemn and ſteady attendance of *Civicus* began to gather around him, and looked at him with ſmiling countenances, mixed

mixed with ſeriouſneſs; and one of them, venerable for piety and conſiderable ſtanding in the ways of God, thus addreſſed our young friend.

My dear young Friend,

I have noticed you with a great deal of pleaſure and ſacred delight, this morning, during the whole of divine worſhip; and am inclined to think, that you are one of the dear followers of the deſpiſed Nazarene; I truſt my hope is not ill founded.

Civicus. Dear Sir, I am greatly obliged by your kindneſs, and freely tell you, if I am one, it is ſo very lately, that I fear to ſay poſitively I am, but I can ſay, it is my moſt earneſt deſire ſo to be; and I think I can ſay, I have this morning had ſuch a ſolemn pleaſure, and at ſome moments, ſuch deep conviction of my native depravity and actual guilt, as I never had before; nor am I without an humble hope, and ſome drops of conſolation; for though I never heard to ſuch advantage till now, yet I have enjoyed the moſt beneficial converſation of my good friend, Evangeliſta, before, and it was that which drew me here this Morning.

Goodman. My dear Sir, I am ſincerely glad of it. and am diſpoſed to rejoice on your account, and I truſt the Lord will draw your heart effectually to himſelf, make you happy in his love, and preſerve you to the end. Take courage, be not afraid, fear nothing but ſinning, and the Lord will be with you.*

Civicus. My dear Friend, I thank you for your kind advice, and truſt that the Lord will be with me; he knows I want him as much as any poor ſoul ever did in the world. May he be with you and me alſo, and each of us till he may ſee good to take us to glory. They all pronounced a chearful *Amen!* And then cordially ſhook hands and parted.

Now *Evangeliſta* comes by, and takes *Civicus* by the hand, and ſays, now my *Civicus* knows who the miniſter is.

* Is not Goodman's example worthy of imitation?

Civicus Yes, my *Evangeliſta*, I now underſtand your character and calling better than I did before, But oh! how am I aſtoniſhed!

Evangeliſta. At what is your wonder exited, my Civicus?

Civicus. At the ſolemnity, ſimplicity, and heavenly grandeur of your animating worſhip. I hardly know which to wonder at moſt, my own ſtupidity and folly, or the glory and grandeur of the houſe and worſhip of God. Had I known any thing of its charming excellence before, I would not have neglected it till now. What a beaſt was I, not to have frequented the Houſe of God till now? But oh! how do I bleſs the kind hand of providence that led me into your company, and thereby into the Houſe of God. During the ſinging of the firſt Hymn, I was ſtruck with ſolemnity and filled with delight; and could not help exclaiming to myſelf, *ſurely this, this is the gate of heaven!* I never joined in ſuch worſhip before. In reading, I was much entertained; nor did I ever ſee ſuch beauty in the holy ſcriptures till now, they ſhone on my mind with new light, and in them I beheld an unſpeakable glory. Alas! how blind have I been to the glories of this heaven-deſcended book.† Oh! that I had been acquainted with the houſe and worſhip of God before. The ſermon has made ſuch an impreſſion on my mind as no other ſermon ever did. The prayers before and after, were quite new to me, I never heard the like, nor ever felt my heart join in any ſo cordially and fervently, till this morning. Indeed, every part of your worſhip was ſo new to me, and I thought, ſo divine; thar I can find no words capable of expreſſing my ideas fully, or ſetting forth the pleaſures I have felt in it. Nor, on the other hand, can words deſcribe the convictions and ſelf-reproof I have had for neglecting ſo long this terreſtial dwelling of the Moſt High. The worſhip and the people ſeemed to me to be all of a heavenly and ſpiritual kind. But I am now happy to know I have found the Houſe of God at laſt.

Evan.

† II. Peter, i. 21.

Evan. I am very happy, dear Civicus, to find your aſtoniſhment ſo laudably, and ſo properly excited. It is certainly very right to behold with holy aſtoniſhment, the kindneſs and mercy of our God in appointing the chriſtian ſabbath and worſhip, and with grateful hearts to adore our merciful Lord for it. And that we ſhould ever either neglect or deſpiſe the one or the other, is the moſt aſtoniſhing ingratitude that can exiſt. But, my Civicus, be aſſured that your feelings are realized by all thoſe who are brought into the new world of divine grace. They all ſee, as you do, the marvellous kindneſs and love of God in ſending the goſpel, in the appointment of his houſe and worſhip. And they all deplore their own lamentable ignorance, prejudice, and bigotry, as well as their ſinful neglect of the word and worſhip of God. Therefore, my Civicus, your caſe is not ſingular, but quite of the ſame nature as theirs. At the ſame time, you have the more abundant reaſon to be thankful to the Lord of life, who has thus favored you.

Civicus. I am happy, my dear Evangeliſta, to be able to ſee as I now do, how I have been led by divine providence into the way in which it appears to me the Lord deſigned to do me good. I was unconſciouſly led into your company, at a time when I thought I was as good as any of my neighbours, and that, conſequently, all was well, and I had nothing to fear; nor did I know, either that I wanted, or that I ſhould meet with ſuch a kind inſtructor; nor had I any ſuch a deſire. And as for the houſe of God, though I certainly had heard of the exiſtence of ſuch a place, yet I had no acquaintance with it, nor any deſire after it. I thought my *pariſh church* was quite right, and that all thoſe who ſeparated from her, were weak and contemptable, if not wicked people. Oh the ſtupidity of the carnal heart! But, bleſſed be the Lord! I now know where the healing waters flow, and ſee where the true light ſhines, and have felt their genial influences on my mind; and glory for ever to the Lord, this has ſlain my hateful prejudice, and ſhewn me my former error. Yea, it has powerfully diſpoſed me to

love and delight in that which I had hitherto hated. For though, for good manners ſake, I was habitually civil and obliging to all my neighbours, yet I had no love for that which I now ſee to be ſuperlatively lovely. I mean the precious goſpel itſelf, and the goſpel worſhip. I ſuppoſe, my Evangeliſta, that the mode you have adopted this morning, is your general plan.

Evan. Certainly, my Civicus; thought at times we uſe ſuch variety as circumſtances may require, yet (as you ſay) this is our general plan: and we have adopted it on the cleareſt conviction of its ſuperior utility and ſpirituality, and its agreeableneſs to the true nature of divine and acceptable worſhip, and the gracious feelings of the mind of man; or, which is better ſtill, that it is ſtrictly ſcriptural.

Civicus. I am ſincerely glad of it, for never in my life did I feel ſuch ſolemn pleaſure, or ſuch ſacred delight as I have felt this morning. The Hymns were ſo expreſſive of my feelings, and the Prayers ſo congenial with my deſires, that I thought heaven was come down to earth, and the ſongs of the bleſſed ſung below. As for the Sermon, it was the firſt I ever heard that did me any real good. Its divine truths and doctrines I had known nothing of till I converſed with you. But ſuch light did I now ſee, and ſuch energy have I felt, as till now I was a total ſtranger to. Your doctrine, I am ſure, is the doctrine of the ſcriptures, and therefore, divinity is ſtamped on it, and as ſuch my heart moſt cordially embraces it. My ſoul is expanded and captivated by its influence; and from this happy day, I ſhall attend (by divine aid) at the Houſe of God, as often as its doors are open for the worſhip of the Lord. I now deſign conſtantly to attend the Lord's earthly courts. *Bleſſed be God!* I now ſee where the heavenly manna falls, and through grace, am reſolved I will go and gather it up. Let the ſwine go and gather up the huſks which the *moral male Lecturers* give to their poor deluded diſciples; but I will now feed on the heavenly manna of evangelic truth.

Evan.

Evan. I am exceedingly pleaſed, my dear Civicus, with theſe lively feelings which you have expreſſed, and truſt you have found the truth of *David's* obſervation, that *the entrance of the Lord's word giveth light.** It is clear you were dark enough before, but now you have felt the entrance of God's word, you are made to ſee. This is an inconceivable bleſſing; and this is evident, for it has ſlain your prejudice; and to be bleſt with a knowledge of the truth, as it is in Jeſus, and to have faith to believe it, is *great indeed.* To be enabled to trample on our native prepoſſeſſions, is an aſtoniſhing mercy; and I take it to be an happy evidence, that you are as the Apoſtle ſays the believing *Theſſalonians* were, *choſen to ſalvation, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.*†

Civicus. Indeed, my Evangeliſta, I hope this is really true, for I am convinced, that nothing but a power divinely ſtrong, could either ſlay my prejudice, or renew my heart; but, thanks to ſovereign grace, I hope I can ſay, I feel both. Yea, through grace, I feel it is done. I can now rejoice in the truth, for I find it has made me free, both from my native prejudice, and the reigning power of unbelief, it has made me prize the Saviour, and put my truſt in him, and taught me to love his word and his worſhip. I therefore bleſs his name, and rejoice in him.

Evan. I rejoice with you, and praiſe the Lord on your account; and obſerving, as I now do, that the ſcriptures are your creed, I hope you will receive nothing on truſt, as an article of faith, or matter of practice, either on my word, or the word of any man; but follow the noble example of the ancient *Bereans,*‡ who ſearched the ſcriptures of the old teſtament daily, to ſee if even Apoſtles ſpake agreeable to them. This they did, and the conſequence was, they received the word with all readineſs of mind, for they found thereby, that the new teſtament doctrine agreed with the old, and that the former fulfilled the latter, and this inſpired them with readineſs of mind to receive apoſtolic

* Pſalm cxix. 130. † II. Theſ. ii. 13. ‡ Acts xvii. 11.

tolic preaching, and by this they were made wiſe to ſalvation. Mark their example, my Civicus, and go and do likewiſe; and remember, that no human authority can make ſacred any thing whatever, which has not been made ſo by Chriſt's own appointment. It is the will of the Almighty alone, which renders any obſervance a religious duty, or any doctrine an article of the chriſtian faith; other authority is of *no account* in matters of religion.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, I am fully convinced of the propriety and juſtice of what you aſſert; and by divine aid am determined to abide by theſe ſentiments, and to act accordingly; for I am perſuaded that the Bible is a divine Revelation, and therefore, every doctrine and every rite of a religious nature, muſt be agreeable to this divine rule, or elſe they are of no authority with any good man, and it is this conviction which has inclined me ſo cordially to embrace it; and the faith and order which your church receives and acts by.

Evan. Your obſervation is pleaſing, my Civicus. But I pray that it may be proved by your future conduct, that your attachment to our doctrine and worſhip is the effect of ſound converſion to God; and if ſo, it will abide with you: and then, while you adopt the faith and order which we judge ſcriptural, you will not be formal in the judicious uſe of a proper form. Let us never forget that the *power* of godlineſs is the *principal* thing; and that *without it*, a form,* however ſcriptural, is but as a *dead carcaſs* without a ſoul. But when the power of godlineſs is felt, *that* will lead us to adopt the moſt edifying manner of addreſſing the Lord, both in private and public, and we ſhall not content ourſelves with the externals of religion; but in the obſervation of the outward regulations which we account agreeable to God's Word, and the beſt feelings of a gracious ſoul, we ſhall find the Kingdom of God is within us, in *righteouſneſs*, and *peace*, and *joy* in the Holy Ghoſt.‡ Now if you become ſuch a *diſſenter*

* II. Tim. iii. 5. ‡ I. Cor. iv. 20—Rom. xiv. 17.

diſſenter as this, then I ſhall ſay, you are a *Chriſtian indeed.* For it is pure chriſtanity which we contend for, and not mere formality.

But what God has joined together, we intend not to ſeparate; the moſt edifying form, is the moſt ſcriptural: for that, and *above all,* for the *vital power* of chriſtianity we contend, and by it we hope ever to abide. May you, my Friend, go and do likewiſe.

Civicus. I am thankful, dear Evangeliſta, for all your kind advice, for I feel it to be as intereſting as it is kind, and heartily join with what you advance, and I hope to prove *this,* in my future conduct from hence forward; or rather, I truſt divine grace will prove it in me and by me.

Evan. My Brother, may the Lord bleſs thee more and more, and make theſe thy happy feelings, as laſting as thy life, and as increaſing as thy moments; and then, the end of thy faith will be the eternal ſalvation of thy ſoul. Which may the Lord grant, for Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

Duty calls us now to part, to take a little refreſhment, and to prepare for the evening worſhip.

Civicus. Agreed readily.——May we have a happy meeting this afternoon, and a refreſhing ſhower of divine influence in the worſhip of God this evening.

Evan. Amen, and amen! Dear Civicus adieu.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, adieu; may grace and peace be with us.

REFLECTION, by EVANGELISTA.

How good is it to be enabled to ſupport and carry on an edifying converſation. Were chriſtians more in the habit of converſing in a judicious and ſpiritual manner, how much more good may be done by them than ever yet has been. But thoſe who would converſe ſpiritually, muſt have much influence from the divine Spirit; and then their thoughts and words will be at liberty to engage in a profitable manner in chriſtian

chriſtian converſation: and then to, if called by providence to join the company of thoſe in our way who may be ſtrangers to true godlineſs, we ſhall know how to addreſs them properly without offence; at leaſt in ſome inſtances. May all thoſe who profeſs godlineſs, be bleſt with all that heavenly wiſdom which ſhall make us meet for every good word and work on earth; and prepare us for eternal glory in heaven. Let us aim at this, remembering, that our heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them who aſk him. He commands us to aſk, and promiſes us that we ſhall receive; he bids us ſeek, and ſays we ſhall find; let us make trial, and find it verified.

Evangeliſta and *Civicus* having parted, during the interval of divine worſhip; *Civicus* began his Soliloquy in the following ſtrains.

SOLILOQUY, by CIVICUS.

Oh my ſoul! how thou haſt now been directed into the courts of Jehovah's temporary reſidence; ſurely it was the Houſe of God, and thou didſt feel it to be the frontier of the heavenly world. How great is the marvellous kindneſs of God to ſuch a benighted wretch: I, who neither knew God, nor had any deſire to know him, or any regard for his houſe and worſhip, but held the ſame in contempt; yet I have been ſent for to come into the earthly manſion of the great King, the King of Sion!* I have been fed and feaſted there, on the royal dainties provided for the King's Children!† Wonderful grace! Amazing love of the Lord of Sabaoth! But I want a heart tuned high with the muſic of heaven, to chaunt his glorious praiſes. How wiſe and how kind is thy providence, O Lord! I adore thee, I praiſe thee, I love thee; oh that I could love thee more, and better do thy ſacred pleaſure! What an entertainment this! How divinely ſweet were the ſacred ſongs of praiſe; ſurely they were copied from the ſongs of the redeemed in the heavenly world;‡ and therefore, the muſic of

* Pſalm ii. 6. † Prov. ix. 1, 2. ‡ Rev. xiv. 3.

of heaven deſcended to earth; and this was that which made the ſinging ſo divinely pleaſant. Oh how I love it! And the prayers, ſurely I never heard the like before; but how natural, how ſpiritual, how rational; and it appears to me that this is the moſt juſt and proper mode of addreſſing the Almighty, becauſe prompted and indited by our feelings, and that ſenſe of want, as well as of gratitude, which the mind perceives. This appears to me to be beſt ſuited to the nature of divine worſhip, and the beſt feelings of the mind of man. For I know, if my mind feels want, this feeling will teach me to expreſs that want in ſuitable language; and I believe, that the acceptable prayer is the expreſſion of mental feelings, and mental deſires. I have obſerved, that even infants and young children can expreſs their feelings, either in words, geſtures, or cries, in a manner which their parents well underſtand: and can the heaven-born children of God be leſs capable of expreſſing their mental feelings and deſires, than infants and children are their natural ones? Surely not. Bleſſed be God for ever and ever, that my deteſted prejudice againſt free prayer is now ſlain, and that I have taſted its ſweetneſs, and ſeen its propriety. Beſides, the Lord wants not a well ſet form of words to underſtand our meaning, I now ſee he reads the naked breaſt, and knows perfectly every ſecret wiſh.* I find the compaſſion of the Lord is ſuch as tender parents feel; for he knows our frail frame, and underſtands all our ſighs, and reads the meaning of every groan.† Well, *I want a Prayer-Book no longer*, for now I feel I have the *Spirit of prayer* imparted to me, and I find this is *far better than all the books in the world.*

But oh! was there ever ſuch a debtor to ſovereign grace as I? Glory to the Lord to everlaſting ages! The recollection of the ſermon brings to my mind thine inexpreſſible kindneſs, my moſt merciful Saviour: thine is compaſſion indeed! and thine be the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

My

* Pſalm cxxxix. 2. † Rom. viii. 26, 27.—I. Cor. ii. 10.

My heart expands with pleaſure, while I recollect thoſe divine doctrines of the Saviour's compaſſion to his loſt and ſtraying Sheep: and now I know, what till lately I had no juſt conception of, what a Goſpel Sermon is; for the doctrines preached this morning at the houſe of God, are, I am ſure, divinely true, for they are revealed in ſcripture; and with this clear conviction, my heart embraces them, and my ſoul is captivated with their heavenly influence. and from this happy day, it is my intention to attend conſtantly at this earthly manſion of the King of Heaven. I feel my ſoul long for the courts of the Lord, and to thirſt for thoſe healing waters of heavenly life,* which flow ſweetly there. I think I ſhall never be able to live without conſtant draughts of this divine refreſhment; ſo that I may ſay, I have made the Lord's houſe my ſpiritual home; and comparatively, I ſhall be happy no where elſe but there. Happy people who are there cheriſhed and nouriſhed by the doctrines of divine truth. Loving ſouls, I feel your kindneſs, and may the Lord ſmile on you; and thou, my dear *Evangeliſta*, the Lord bleſs thee in thine own ſoul, and in thine honorable and glorious work. And oh, that this evening the Lord may be eminently with thee, and graciouſly preſent with us, to bleſs and chear us, that we may have freſh matter of praiſe, and the name of our Jeſus have a revenue of new adorations.

The time of divine worſhip now draws nigh, to repair again to the Houſe of God: and *Civicus* goes forth to attend divine worſhip, and at the Houſe of God meets his friend *Evangeliſta*, and ſalutes him as in the following

DIALOGUE.

* Ezekiel, xlvii. 9.—Pſalm xlvi. 4.—Rev. xxii. 1.

Printed by Bigg and Cottle, St. Auguſtine's Back.

DIALOGUE IV.

On the divine Being and Perfections, and the nature of acceptable worſhip.

CIVICUS. Dear *Evangeliſta,* I am happy to meet you again at the Houſe of God, and if I miſtake not, I can ſay, I even now feel an enkindling of love and praiſe for divine mercies already received, as well as of ardent prayer that you may be aſſiſted to preach the word of the Lord with all freedom and fervor, and that a divine bleſſing may attend the truth which you deliver to every heart, and to my own in particular.

Evan. My Brother, I am delighted to hear thee thus expreſs thyſelf, and may the Lord accept thy praiſes and hear thy prayers, and grant us a pentecoſtal viſit this evening, and make all to know, that God is here of a truth.——Both expreſs their deſires by a fervent *Amen.*

(Worſhip begins.)

Evangeliſta proceeds to begin divine worſhip as before; and having read a portion of the ſacred word, ſung the divine praiſes, and prayed with peculiar fervor and energy; then he proceeded to his ſermon; in which he largely inſiſted on and proved, that all true goſpel preaching lays the ſinner low in the duſt,* and exalts the Saviour in the higheſt. That it ſtrips him of *all* his fancied goodneſs, and ſuppoſed righteouſneſs, and lays him proſtrate at the Saviour's feet, as guilty and undone. That it ſets forth the all-ſufficiency of his atonement and righteouſneſs and interceſſion; and that he ſaves to the uttermoſt, all who come to God by him.† That no phariſee,

* Matt. ix. 13—xii. 11. † Heb. vii. 25.

phariſee,‡ however reformed, moralized, and poliſhed he may be, can be ſaved without Chriſt. That no returning ſinner will ever be rejected by him, however great and manifold his crimes may have been. That thoſe whom Chriſt pardons, he alſo ſanctifies and ſaves them from ſin, by the powerful operation of his Holy Spirit.

The ſervice was then concluded in the uſual manner: and the whole of it was lively, animating, and impreſſive; aud all preſent ſeemed ſenſible that the Divine Preſence was there. The Sermon carried with it a power and evidence which was generally felt.

Service being concluded, *Evangeliſta* and *Civicus* retired together, and when arrived at home they thus began to converſe.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, you have been preaching on the great Redemption, it is certainly a moſt delightful ſubject, but for the preſent, if you pleaſe, let our contemplations turn on the Divine Being and perfections.

Evan. I conſent,—and obſerve,

1. Deity is poſſeſſed of undervived exiſtence, and independant Being; without beginning, author, or cauſe; for the holy word informs us, he *is* from everlaſting to everlaſting;* and that he is the former of *all things*;† that he created all things by the word of his power; he ſpoke all things into exiſtence: conſequently, he is the ever-living and ſelf-exiſting *I AM.* The fountain of all life and the great progenitor of univerſal nature. God is of himſelf, without any conceivable derivation, dependance, or limitation whatever. Therefore, it is well ſaid by *Paul,* he who comes to God muſt believe that he *is.*‖ He does not ſay what he is; for that can never be fully told; but the natural and neceſſary inference to be drawn from it is, that he is infinite: in his nature, perfections, and attributes,

‡ Matt, v. 20—xxiii. 23. * Pſalm xc. 2, 4.
† Gen. i. 1.—Pſalm cii. 25.—Rev. iv. 11. ‖ Heb. xi. 6.

attributes, great beyond all poſſible conception; and infinitely exalted above all bleſſing and praiſe. But,

2. Deity muſt needs be immutable. The ſacred word ſays, *he is without variation or ſhadow of a change.*§ He is the *ſame* from eternity to eternity. What he now is, that he ever was, and his being, purpoſes, and perfections never alter. Immutability is an eſſential perfection of the divine nature; and the being of God is an *eternal* NOW. Reaſon will dictate this truth, that variableneſs is abſolutely inconſiſtent with perfection: but God is infinitely perfect. Therefore, he is as the ſcripture teaches, *the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever.** But I obſerve,

3. Omnipotence† is eſſential to the Divine Being. The works of creation evince this; for he who made all things, and preſerves univerſal nature muſt be the Lord Almighty. And the Being who does this, muſt be poſſeſſed of all conceivable power; yea, of inconceivable energy. But Jehovah commanded the heavens, the earth, and the ſeas into being, and gave life to all living things, both celeſtial and terreſtial.‡ Therefore, all poſſible power reſides in him natively, as in its proper ſource. And he can create or deſtroy as he ſees good, for he can effect whatever he pleaſes. Conſequently, all powers of every ſhape and name, depend on divine power, nor can they exiſt but as God chuſes. For the infinite capability of Jehovah reaches beyond the utmoſt ſtretch of thought, nor can *men* or *angels* either tell or conceive§ how great his omnipotence actually is, or ſay what wonders it *can*, or *cannot* perform; but this is evident, it can do whatever it wills, whether it be the creation of millions of worlds, or the annihilation of all beings but his own. Reaſon and ſcripture agree in this; that Jehovah is the Lord Almighty. But,

4 Omniſcience

§ James i. xvii.—Mal. iii. 6.—Job. xxiii. 13. * Heb. xiii. 8.
† Rev. xi. 17. ‡ Col. i. 16. § Job xxxvi. 26.—xxvii. 28.

4. Omniſcience‖ is alſo an infinite perfection of the divine mind; it is eſſential to Deity to be *infinite in knowledge.* God, who is the fountain of life, is alſo the ſource of light; and all light, natural intellectual, and ſpiritual, reſides in the Godhead, and flows from him. He is the *Father of Lights.*¶ He knoweth all things in the heavenly world, and gave the angelic hoſt, and the ſpirits of the juſt every particle of knowledge which they poſſeſs. He knoweth every thing on earth, nor can any thing whatever be hid from him, whether it be great or ſmall, good or evil. All that wiſdom which the ſons of men poſſeſs, he is the author and the giver of it; nor has any man a ſingle grain more than God gives him. He knoweth all things in the infernal regions,* every diabolical ſcheme againſt the church of Chriſt, or any individual ſaint, is perfectly known to him; hell is uncovered before him. Knowledge in God, as well as power, is *infinite* and *eternal*: and every thing which tranſpires through the narrow bounds of time, and whatever ſhall come to paſs to eternity, is *ever preſent* to infinite knowledge: nor is any thing *paſt*, or *to come*, to Divine Omniſcience. All things, from the greateſt to the leaſt, are *perfectly* known to God. And all things done, or that ever ſhall be done, whether good or evil, either by men or angels, remain the ſame before him. Nor is it poſſible that any thing ſhould eſcape his notice; but all things now in exiſtence, and whatever ſhall exiſt in future, are underſtood by Jehovah with infinite preciſion. And when every thing that ever ſhall come to paſs, has been actually compleated, it will add nothing to the infinite knowledge of the *great Jehovah.* For he knows all things *perfectly*, *infinitely*, and *everlaſtingly.* But I obſerve,

5. That Omnipreſence,‡ is likewiſe a perfection of the Divine Eſſence. For that power which created all things muſt needs be every where preſent, as the preſerver of

‖ Pſalm cxxxix. 7 to 12.
* Job xxvi. 6.—Prov. xv. 11
¶ James i. 17.
‡ Pſalm cxxxix. 8. to 11.

of all things. Infinite power muſt be omnipreſent, for nothing can be where it is not. Conſequently, no place or ſpace,§ however capacious or contracted it may be, can either circumſcribe or exclude him, he fills all worlds, and upholds univerſal nature. It is impoſſible to conceive of any place or ſpace from which the infinite Creature is abſent. He is, therefore, the *ever-preſent* and *omnipreſent Jehovah.* In the heavenly world he is ever preſent to felicitate the celeſtial inhabitants by the manifeſtation of his unveiled glories, and filling the celeſtial regions with inconceivable ſplendor and refulgence. On earth, his power is preſent to protect, preſerve, and ſupply|| the wants of every living thing. To his ſaints in *this world,* he manifeſts his gracious and merciful preſence; and they are at all times conſcious of his omnipreſence and of his general providence, and at ſome ſeaſons they are feelingly conſcious of his ſpecial and gracious preſence; and of his merciful interference in their favor. To them, divine omnipreſence is a ſource of conſolation, and a ſacred ſtimulus to true virtue. In the infernal regions, divine vindictive Juſtice is preſent to puniſh the guilty with its terrors. Thus the exiſtence of all things, prove to a demonſtration, the omnipreſence of God; for all things and all beings, were made, and are ſupported by his power, and nothing can exiſt in the abſence of that power. Conſequently, divine power is every where preſent. But I obſerve,

6. That infinite Goodneſs,* is alſo a perfection of the Deity, natively and neceſſarily reſident in him. He who made all things, and ſupplies all things with his munificence, muſt needs be infinitely good. But Jehovah ſupplies all rational beings, and all animal creation with being and ſupport. The inhabitants of the heavenly world live on his bounty, in the moſt felicitating and abundant manner. They derive from him

§ I. Kings viii. 27. || Pſalm cxlv. 15, 16, 18.
* Pſalm cxlv. 9—20.—cxlvi. 7 to 10.

him their being and their bliſs, as well as their ſpotleſs purity; their happineſs is perfect in its kind, and eternal in its duration; and great and glorious above our conceptions. All the inhabitants of the earth, are likewiſe living on his bounty, and ſupplied by his goodneſs, for *he makes his ſun to ſhine on the evil, and on the good,*† *and he ſends his rain on the juſt and on the unjuſt.* Yea, the eyes of all living look to him for ſupply, and he gives them their meat in due ſeaſon. Behold, with wonder and delight, how divine goodneſs extends to, and is enjoyed by all animate nature. Through all the earth divine goodneſs ſhines, and all fleſh enjoys its proportion of the ſame: and that proportion is ſuited to the natures and wants of all, in the beſt poſſible manner that infinite wiſdom and rectitude conceives to be moſt proper. All men partake of his general goodneſs,‡ but the ſaints of God partake of his ſpecial grace. To them he gives grace and glory, and from them withholds *no good thing.*§ Divine goodneſs has repleniſhed the earth with immenſe ſtores of good, both for man and beaſt, and from thence they derive ſuitable ſupport and nouriſhment: and we may juſtly ſay of it, it is higher than the heavens, deeper than the loweſt depths, more extenſive than the wideſt ſpace, and broader than the utmoſt bounds of creation. It is as infinite as the divine mind, and perfect as God himſelf, for 'tis boundleſs and inconceivable. Let us diſmiſs this idea by ſinging the following lines.

"He makes his graſs the hills adorn,
And clothes the ſmiling fields with corn;
He pours his goodneſs from the ſkies,
And ſends all creatures rich ſupplies;
He gives us all things, and withholds
No real good from upright ſouls."

WATTS.

But in the next place,

7. Mercy is an eſſential perfection in the Deity: he

† Matt. v. 45. ‡ I. Tim. iv. 10. § Pſ. lxxxiv. 11.

he tells us his name is *Merciful*;* and alſo, that *his tender Mercies are over all his works:* that as tender parents pity their offspring, ſo he pities them that fear him. But mercy has reſpect to miſery and wretchedneſs, and divine mercy has had reſpect to miſerable man, and of its *own mere good pleaſure.* God, in the perſon of his Son, has treaſured up boundleſs mercy and infinite grace, for the miſerable children of *Adam.* It was divine mercy that pitied us in our low eſtate, becauſe it endures for ever;† and provided redemption for us. It was divine mercy that ſent ſalvation to us; and it was divine mercy, that liberated *us,* my dear *Civicus,* from the chains of our ſinful ſlavery, and healed us of our ſpiritual maladies, and delivered us from the *curſe* under which we had fallen; and it will make us meet for glory. Divine mercy finds us food, and clothes us with love, protects us from danger, ſupports us under our trials, and relieves our neceſſities, yea, and makes *all things* work for our good:§ and, to crown all, takes us at laſt to heaven, and makes us perfectly and eternally happy. But in the next place,

8. Perfect Juſtice dwells natively in the Deity. Yes, the Maker and Judge of all the earth does RIGHT.‖ He is the juſt God, and all his works are done in righteouſneſs. He pardons and ſaves all thoſe who believe his goſpel, and obey his commands; and puniſhes only for ſin and unrighteouſneſs which is never repented of. The perſeveringly wicked *only,* he condemns; the believing and repenting ſinner, he freely and fully juſtifies. He pleads the cauſe of his oppreſſed, and plagues the oppreſſors. As Lord of all, he has promulgated the beſt laws, and the obedience they require, is productive of the moſt perfect felicity. But the impious and finally impenitent tranſgreſſors of thoſe pure laws, are not any one of them ſuffered to paſs with impunity. Every part of the divine

* Exod. xxxiv. 6. † Pſalm ciii. 13. ‡ Pſ. cvxxvi. 23.
§ Rom. viii. 28. ‖ Gen. xviii. 25.—Pſ. xcvii. 2.—xcviii. 9.

divine conduct is regulated by infinite juſtice, and though at times ſhort-ſighted mortals can ſee nothing but clouds and darkneſs round about him, yet Juſtice and Judgment are ſtill the habitation of his throne. His rewards are juſt, and his corrections are right. His curſe falls on the *incorrigible only*: and he pardons repenting tranſgreſſors in full conſiſtency with the moſt perfect equity; for he puniſhes ſin while he pardons the penitent. Therefore, we ſay, with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs of truth, that *all* his works are done in righteouſneſs. And at laſt, the righteous and the wicked will ſee and own, that the Lord is a God of infinite juſtice. The ſaints will ſee it and rejoice, and the wicked muſt own, they have but the due reward of their evil deeds, even when they fall beneath his frown. All ſhall then own, his nature is pure, his laws are right, and that he is good and juſt. But I obſerve in the next place,

9. That God is infinitely wiſe,* It is eſſential to the Divine Being to be infinite in wiſdom; yea, all wiſdom dwells in him, and he is the great fountain from whence it flows; in him it originates, and from him it proceeds to all who are bleſt with any ſhare of it. Therefore, he can rule, and over-rule all creatures and all events. He can permit evil without being the author of it: and he can over-rule the evil actions of his offending creatures, without conniving at their ſin, and bring about the greateſt good, when they commit the greateſt evil. He can, and has ſubſtituted the innocent for the guilty,† to ſuffer for and redeem them; and that in the moſt perfect conſiſtency with infinite juſtice; and by this means, he can and has puniſhed an innocent victim, and thereby ſatisfied divine juſtice,‡ and redeemed and pardoned an innumerable multitude of ſinners, of the blackeſt character.§ By his wiſdom he has actually planned and effected this

* I. Tim. i. 17.—Rom. xvi. 27.—I. Cor. i. 24. † Iſ. liii. 10.
‡ Pſalm xl. 6 to 8.—Heb. x. 5 to 10.—ix. 26.
§ I. Cor. vi. 9 to 11.

this, in the perſon of his Son: and through that redemption which Jeſus has wrought, he has imparted renovation and eternal life to unnumbered millions. He can and does govern all worlds without difficulty, confuſion, or perturbation, and with the moſt perfect quieſcence. He can ſuffer confuſion to ariſe without authoriſing it, to bring about the moſt beautiful order and harmony; and by dire anarchy, he can remove worſe evils, and effect the moſt beneficial reforms;‖ and by theſe means he can manifeſt his wiſdom without being either *unkind* or *unwiſe*: and all this he has effected in divers times and places. He can ſuffer vice to ariſe to the higheſt, and thereby deſtroy the wicked, and deliver his people, and make an effectual way for the ſpread of his goſpel, and the reign and triumph of true virtue, and the virtuous of mankind. This and much more abundantly, will divine wiſdom glorouſly effect in its own time and way, and in the moſt conſpicuous manner; and, to human reaſon, by very unlikely means. Sound reaſon will dictate, that this is true of Jehovah; and the ſcripture ſays, he is the *all-wiſe* God. But I obſerve,

10. That abſolute and uncontroled Sovereignity,* is an attribute of Deity, and this by native right. The great Author of all things muſt needs be the rightful owner,† and the Sovereign diſpoſer of all things. All things and all powers are his own; the univerſe is his kingdom, and all creatures muſt be ſubject to him. They who willingly ſubmit, are happy in his favor; but the obſtinate and rebellious ſhall be conquered, either by juſtice or mercy. Indeed, his willing ſubjects on earth, are all of them *firſt* ſubdued by mercy; and thoſe who perſiſt in their rebellion, fall under his vindictive hand. He has an infinite right to rule at pleaſure, for he is the *only Potentate*‡ with whom power originates. Therefore, he is perfectly and abſolutely right in doing whatever he pleaſes.

Creatures

‖ II. Kings x. 18 to 28.
† Pſ. l. 10, 11.
* Dan. iv. 5, 17, 34, 35.
‡ I. Tim. vi. 15.

Creatures of every name, are the productions of his power, and rational creatures of every deſcription, owe their being and capacities to his diſcriminating goodneſs. From his hand proceeds all life, and all good things; and, therefore, all things muſt be perfectly at his diſpoſal; and it is infinitely right that they ſhould. His dominion is, as it ought to be, both abſolute,§ univerſal, and eternal. This is the excluſive right and prerogative of the great Jehovah; and neither prieſt nor potentate can pretend to any ſuch right, without arrogance and blaſphemy. He only, who is infinitely wiſe and perfectly good, can be the abſolute and univerſal Ruler; but theſe perfections are found in God alone: therefore, 'tis his excluſive right; and unbiaſſed reaſon will confirm this fact: the ſcripture ſays, *his Kingdom ruleth over* ALL :|| and he himſelf is, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.*¶ But I would obſerve,

11. That ſpotleſs purity and holineſs, reſide natively in God,* and are eſſential to the divine nature. A God of infinite juſtice muſt needs be ſpotleſsly pure, and he who does all things in abſolute righteouſneſs, muſt needs be holy: therefore, he ſays to all his children, *be ye holy for I am holy.* He who is a juſt God and a Saviour, is alſo, at the ſame time, a ſin pardoning, and a ſin avenging God. For, though he pardons penitents, he puniſhes their crimes in the perſon of their Surety, and corrects them in a fatherly way, for their tranſgreſſions, though he ſaves them for ever. And the finally impenitent, are puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction, from the preſence of the Lord and from the glory af his power. Therefore, it is ſafe to conclude, in the language of the Lord himſelf. His ways are pure: he is *righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.*† *There is none holy as the Lord, none ſo righteous as our God.* He is a God of infinite purity, and he looks upon ſin with deteſtation and abhorrance. And though he ſaves his people, he ſaves them *from*‡ their

§ Pſ. lxxvi. 9, 10. & 1xv. 13.
|| Pſ. xcix. 9.—Lev. xx. 7.
† I. Sam. ii. 2.
¶ Rev. xix. 16.
* Pſ. cxlv. 17.
‡ Matt. i. 21.

their ſins, not *in* them. They are made to know that ſin is an evil and bitter thing; yea, more bitter than death, in any form whatever, and more loathſome than gall and wormwood, or the moſt deadly poiſon; he ſets them apart for himſelf,§ and holds them in his hand, and makes them to appear as lights in the world. He teaches them to imitate him in his holineſs, and to hate and forſake iniquity, and the conduct and converſation of ſinful men. All which ſhews him to be the *Holy One*; for nothing that is unholy or impure can dwell in his preſence. Holineſs to the Lord, is written on the hearts, and imprinted on the foreheads of all them who ſhall dwell in the courts of his glory. Therefore, though he is a ſin-pardoning, he is alſo, a ſin-avenging God. This is further evinced both by his law and his goſpel. The *law* enjoins the moſt perfect holineſs, both in heart and life; the *goſpel* reſtores all who are made partakers of its benefits, to holineſs internally and externally. Conſequently, it is evident, that Jehovah is a God of *ſpotleſs purity*. But I would obſerve,

12. That perfect and inviolable Truth* is natively and neceſſarily inherent in the Divine Being. For a Being ſo good, ſo holy, ſo righteous and juſt, can never falſify.† Truth dwells in him as in its proper fountain, and flows from him as from its native ſource, and ſhines with ſuperlative beauty in all that he ſays. His doctrines are infallibly true, and the predictions he has cauſed to be recorded for our inſtruction, have many of them been verified by the events foretold, and and thoſe which remain to be fulfilled, are all infallibly certain in their accompliſhment. His promiſes are everlaſtfng verity; and he is, and ever will be, a God fulfilling his word.‡

" His truth inviolably keeps
The largeſt promiſe of his lips."

All his threatenings will be fully executed, on the finally impenitent. The truth of God is abſolute and eternal,

§ Pſalm iv. 3.
† Tit. i. 2.
* Jer. x. 10.—Iſaiah xl. 8.
‡ Luke xvi. 17.

eternal, it can never be falsified, altered, or changed; and this is a permanent source of consolation to every believer. His word is firmer than the pillars of heaven, or the foundations of the earth. Safe and happy are all they who put their trust in him. But I would observe again,

13. That incomprehensibility* is an attribute of Deity, and justly attributed to him. The infinite God must needs be beyond the comprehension of finite beings, who are not able to comprehend themselves. Men cannot find out their own finite and limited natures to perfection, much less can they find out the nature of him who is infinite in all perfection. All that can be known of God by any of us, is from the manifestations he has seen good to make of himself in his word, and by his works. The latter shew his power and Godhead,† and convinces our reason that he is able to do whatever he chuses, and to perform wonders far above all that we can conceive or think. The former shews us what he *is*, and tells us, that he is eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, omnipotent, &c. But all our descriptions of him fall infinitely short of what he really is. Indeed all language must fail to describe *him* who is infinite. The most capacious of all the creatures he has made, are but finite and limited; but he is the infinite and incomprehensible God.‡ Therefore, all the praises that are paid him in heaven and earth, fall vastly short in describing his infinity. But his own works praise him, and his word tells us that of him, which could never otherwise have been known. In the scriptures, all that is necessary for us to know of him, is there taught us; both for our present welfare and eternal felicity; and from hence we must derive all accurate knowledge of God. But I would observe again,

14. The divine Essence is ONE,§ and no more, though there be (which idolaters have called) Gods many

* Rom. xi. 33.—Psalm cxlv. 3. † Rom. i. 20.—Job xxvi. 14.
‡ Job xxxvii. 23. § Deut. vi. 4.—Isa. xlii. 8.—I. Cor. viii. 4.

many, and Lords many, but to us, who know and believe our Bibles, there is but ONE GOD. *ONE great first Cauſe of all things, One* Almighty Creator and Preſerver, who hath *all* power and life in himſelf, and whoſe reign is infinite, unbounded, and eternal. He is therefore, the *Only Potentate*; and there are no more Gods but *He*. Reaſon itſelf can perceive that there can be but *one*, who is an infinite, univerſal, and ſupreme Being; that there can be but *one*, who is over all, God bleſſed for ever. Abſolute ſupremacy is eſſential to *one* God, and this, in the very nature of things, excludes all co-partnerſhip in divine ſupremacy. For if we admit of another to be Jehovah, beſides him who is ſo, neither of them could be Lord of all; for each would reſtrict the other, and neither of them could reign without control. But this is ſuch an abſurdity, that I ſhould think no one can admit for a moment, who believes that there is a God. For it is evident, there can be but *one* who has univerſal dominion. But the Kingdom of God ruleth over all. Therefore, God is *one*. Beſides, there can be but *one* who is the Creator of all things, for if there are *two* who create, one of them muſt be a created creator; but this can never be; therefore, there is but *one* Creator, and that *one* Creator is the eternal Jehovah; and we adopt the language of the pſalmiſt and ſay, *Jehovah is God alone; over all for ever bleſt.* And though none can ſearch him out to perfection, or diſcover but ſome faint traces of his being and perfections, yet he can manifeſt himſelf to as many as he pleaſes, and in what meaſure he pleaſes; in the Bible he has manifeſted himſelf in a manner vaſtly ſuperior to any thing that could ever otherwiſe have been conceived of him; and ſurely, what he is pleaſed to ſay of himſef, muſt needs be moſt ſtrictly and perfectly true. Nor can any thing be ſo rational as to admit, that the divine goodneſs is ſuch, that it will impart to all its rational offspring, that knowledge of the divine will, which it is neceſſary for the honor and happineſs of redeemed man to know, and to be ſubmiſſive to: and it is equally rational to admit, that if God makes

any revelation of himſelf to man, that he thereby diſcovers to him ſomething grand and important of himſelf that can never be known any other way; and by looking into my Bible, and ſearching candidly and ſeriouſly, I find this is *ſtrictly* and *abſolutely** true. Therefore I ſay,

13. That Deity has made known himſelf in the pages of revealed truth,† in a manner that is vaſtly ſuperior to every other that has been or can be made of him, by any man or men that ever exiſted. There we find he deſcribes himſelf to us in ſuch a tranſcendent and glorious manner, as human intellect could never have gueſſed at, if left alone to conceive of God. Reaſon then, muſt bow to revelation, and own the divine teſtemony, though it ſoars above the utmoſt ſtretch of its powers; for here the Deity ſpeaks, and ſound reaſon will ſubmit. On this ground we aſſert, that we believe the Divine Nature is ſocial, though alone; and for this reaſon, we are told, that *there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit*, and that *theſe Three are One.*‡ There is, therefore, *One God*, and but one; but this almighty inconceivable Jehovah is a triune God in unity: and this Triunity is taught us by Jeſus Chriſt, in his inſtitution of chriſtian baptiſm, which is to be adminiſtered in the name of *Father, Son*, and *Holy Ghoſt*. At the baptiſm of Chriſt, we find the *Father* ſpeaks himſelf, and calls Chriſt his *beloved Son*, and the *Holy Spirit* deſcends on him in an aſſumed viſible ſhape. The apoſtolic benediction, is in theſe words: The grace of our *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and the love of *God*, and the communion of the *Holy Ghoſt*, be with you all. In the beginning of the exiſtence of this world, the Spirit of God is ſaid to move, &c. and God ſpeaks of himſelf in the plural number, *let US make man*, § and St. *John* ſays, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with*

* Pſ. xix. 7 to 10—II. Tim. iii. 15, 16. † II. Pet. i. 16 to 21.
‡ I. John v. 7, 8.—Matt. iii. 16, 17.—xxviii. 19, 20. John i. 1, 2.—II. Cor. 13, 14.—Iſaiah vi. 3.—Rev. iv. 8.
§ Gen. i. 2, 26.—Heb. i. 6.

with God, and the Word was God. It appears that the prophets in the old teſtament, and the apoſtles in the new, worſhip the triune God, in theſe words; *Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty.* And that divine worſhip is paid to the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*, both in the old teſtament and the new, is clear, and beyond the power of a rational contradiction. Therefore, to worſhip the *Father* (through Chriſt) is to worſhip God; and to worſhip *Jeſus Chriſt*, is to worſhip God in the perſon of Chriſt; and to worſhip the *Holy Spirit*, is likewiſe to worſhip God. But let us never forget, that there is *one God*, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Chriſt Jeſus;* and that, conſequently, all acceptable worſhip to the *Father*, is directed to him through the *Son*, under the influence of the *Holy Spirit*. And let us never try to reaſon away what God has been pleaſed to ſay of himſelf; and though this is above the power of reaſon to conceive of, farther than revealed in ſcripture; yet, faith prevails here, and we worſhip a triune God in unity.†

Now, my *Civicus*, you have heard my lecture, and that I may diſcover whether you have made any improvement, be ſo good as to favor me with your inferences from what I have advanced.

Civicus. O my *Evangeliſta*, are you going to ſet me to make inferences? I fear I ſhall be but very inapt to ſuch an employment: but however, if I *muſt*, I conſent to do as well as I can. But before I proceed, I would juſt obſerve, it appears to me, that the children of God are called to exerciſe faith in the divine teſtimony, and not to frame ſyſtems of divinity by philoſophical reaſoning. I deſpiſe not reaſon, but it is, in my opinion, the moſt reaſonable of all things to believe, that God cannot deceive, nor ſhew himſelf in falſe diſguiſe; and, that what he ſays of himſelf ſets every other teſtimony eternally aſide, except it be in exact agreement with his own words. Therefore, I infer,

1. If

* I. Tim. ii. 5, † I. Cor. i. 3.—Phil. i. 2.—ii. 1.

1. If God be eternal, there is nothing paſt nor to come with him,‖ for every thing is infinitely known to him; nor can any thing be either forgotten or unforeſeen by him:¶ but all things as they have been, as they now are, or ever ſhall be, remain before him *perfectly* the *ſame*. For, with him there is no variableneſs, nor ſhadow of a change.* But,

2. If Deity be all-knowing, all-powerful, and every where preſent, then all creatures depend on him for *being*, for *well-being*, and *preſervation*; and all this depends entirely on his good pleaſure.† At his command they roſe into exiſtence, and at his frown they periſh; and then, it muſt be clear to every diſcerning mind, that all things, and every creature in the heavens and on the earth, depend abſolutely on the Divine good pleaſure, for being, preſervation, and every good thing. Without this, nothing can exiſt; for without his aid, all creatures muſt ſink, and fall, and die. Therefore, all exiſtence depends on the will, the power, and goodneſs of the great Jehovah. But in the next place,

3. If God be immutable, then whatever he does, is what he had before deſigned to do;‡ for a new reſolution is a change of purpoſe, and a change of purpoſe is inconſiſtent with infinite wiſdom: but God is infinitely wiſe. Conſequently, he is in *one mind*,§ and none can turn him, and what his ſoul deſireth even that he doeth. For the purpoſe of the Lord ſtandeth for ever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations: and he worketh all things after the counſel of his own will. And on this ground and foundation reſts the certain ſalvation of all the throng redeemed by blood divine. But in the next place,

4. If God does all things after the counſel of his own will, then nothing happens by chance, but all things and all events come to paſs moſt wiſely; and in the

‖ Pſalm xxxiii. 11. ¶ Acts xv. 18. * Jam. i. 17.
† Pſalm cxlv. 1, 2, 3. & cxlvi 9. ‡ Eph. i. 11.
Dan. iv. 35.—Eccle. iii. 11, 13. § Job xxiii. 13.

the beſt manner: none can better the divine plan any more than they can alter it. Then it is clear, that all things are ordered by infinite wiſdom, in the moſt proper, as well as the moſt regular and orderly manner: and no doubt but the beauty, order, and propriety of every ſingle ſtep of the divine conduct, will excite the admiration, the praiſe, and gratitude* of all the ſaints in the heavenly world, to eternal ages. But in the next place,

5. If the Deity be infinitely true and juſt, then the ſaints have the moſt firm and ſolid ground for conſolation.† For God has made to them, exceeding many great and precious promiſes; and they may aſſure themſelves, they will all be performed, both to their joy and ſalvation, and the glory of the divine name: for he who is perfectly true, is alſo infinitely faithful, and he will perform every good word of promiſe to them to the uttermoſt, and make them happy in time and to eternity. But in the next place,

6. If Deity be infinitely juſt, he will puniſh all the finally impenitent‡ to the utmoſt of their demerits, and that muſt be, *St. Paul* tells us, with everlaſting deſtruction and baniſhment from his bliſsful preſence into eternal fire, *where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched.*§ For it will be found true by all the finally impenitent and unbelieving; *That the wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God* || For a Being who is infinitely good muſt needs hate evil, and puniſh it; or elſe he muſt ceaſe to be good. A righteous governor on earth, muſt not only reward the good, but puniſh the evil; or otherwiſe he is clothed with power in vain. But God is juſt, and all his works are done in righteouſneſs; therefore, the wicked muſt turn or periſh. But,

7. If God be the univerſal Governor, he will in due time

* Pſalm cxlv. 1, 2, 3. † II. Peter i. 4. ‡ Pſ. cxlvi. 9. Matt. xxv. 46. § Iſaiah lxvi. 24.—Mark ix. 44, 46.
|| Pſalm ix. 17.

time bring in that glorious reign of righteouſneſs and peace, which the ſcripture tells us¶ ſhall adorn the latter days. And no doubt but every ſtep of the divine conduct, is a gradation in the divine proceedure tending towards it; and every ſuch gradation taken is a bringing forward its happy approach; and ſo ſure as there is any one ſtep taken, ſo ſure will all the reſt, and the glorious time arrive in all its fulneſs; and the long wiſhed for day bleſs the the admiring eyes of thoſe who have waited and prayed for it. But in the next place,

8. God being a moſt pure Spirit, knowing all things, and being every where preſent: they who would pay him acceptable worſhip, muſt be ſpiritual worſhippers,* who worſhip him in a ſpiritual manner, through the Mediator. None beſides are like to find acceptance with him. Conſequently, thoſe who are dead in ſin,† are not acceptable worſhippers, but ſinners before him, even in their beſt performances: but ſouls made ſpiritually alive to God, are bleſt with ſaving faith in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, theſe offer ſpiritual ſacrifices acceptable to the Father, by him;‡ and none beſides can. I look upon this to be a matter of ſuch importance, and myſelf ſuch a novice, that I feel incapable of conceiving of it as I could wiſh, nor do I underſtand it as I deſire; I muſt therefore requeſt my *Evangeliſta* to give his thoughts on this intereſting ſubject.

Evan. Your ideas, are pertinent and juſt, and your mind is laudably inquiſitive to know more; I am very glad of this, and I ſhall with the greater freedom and readineſs proceed now to give you a few ideas on the nature of ſpiritual and acceptable worſhip. And I obſerve,

1. Your have anticipated (in a great meaſure) what I had thought proper to mention here. That all acceptable worſhip is a ſpiritual ſacrifice‡ which can be

¶ Dan. vii. 14, 27.—Iſaiah ii. 2. & xi. 9. * John iv. 23, 24.
† Rom. xiv. 23. ‡ I. Peter ii. 5.

be performed by ſpiritual perſons only. Nothing can be more certain; 'tis the doctrine which our Lord taught the woman of Samaria, and us alſo, by the ſame divine word. Therefore, this is a ſettled point. Perſons dead in ſin, reſt in the form of worſhip, but ſouls divinely renewed and made ſpiritually alive cannot be ſatisfied with formality, they *muſt* have nearneſs to God, and communion with him, or they cannot be ſatisfied. But I obſerve in the next place,

2. That to be ſpiritual in the worſhip of God, it is neceſſary to have the underſtanding enlightened by divine truth;‡ for without this 'tis impoſſible to have any acquaintance with the thing itſelf, and equally impoſſible to engage in the glorious work. An unconverted man has no other idea of worſhip than outward geſtures, and uttering words; his ſoul is dead to God, having no right knowledge of him, either in his perſon or worſhip; therefore, his lifeleſs ſoul reſts in dead formality, without any deſire of any thing farther than that; vainly ſuppoſing, that when the religious formula which his ſect has adopted, is performed on a Lord's day, his duty is done, and all is well. Not ſo the chriſtian—and, bleſſed be God, not ſo my *Civicus*; his mind is in ſome good degree enlightened with divine truth, he knows, that *bodily exerciſe profiteth little*:* that *God is a Spirit*,† *and that thoſe who worſhip him* (acceptably) *muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth*. The chriſtian knows, that God is preſent in all places and at all times; and my *Civicus* knows this, and ſometimes he has realized the Divine Preſence with his worſhipping people, and been enabled to conceive of God as being intimately nigh; and has been made really conſcious of the favourable and gracious preſence of the Lord; and in conſequence of that, has been filled with unſpeakable pleaſure and delight; and this has made him ſing, *truly the Lord was in this place, and I had evidence that he was with me.* You know that

‡ Prov. xix, 2.—John xvii. 3
† John iv. 24.
* I. Tim. iv. 8.

that this is a thing really true, for you have enjoyed it; and this is the fulfilment of our Lord's own gracious promiſe, *Lo! I am with you*, &c.‡ *And where two or three are met together in my name, there am I in the midſt of them.* All who read and underſtand the Bible, know this to be a real fact; but you have proved it. No perſon, however, will deſire the enjoyment, but thoſe know it is to be enjoyed. And till a man knows this he cannot be a ſpiritual worſhipper. Knowledge, ſpiritual knowledge, then, is abſolutely neceſſary to ſpiritual worſhip; the latter cannot be, where the former is not enjoyed.

3. But Faith is alſo eſſentially neceſſary,§ *for without faith it is impoſſibe to pleaſe the Lord*; and certainly impoſſible to be ſpiritual worſhippers of God. It is not only neceſſary to know that theſe are the priviledges of the ſaints, but if we would be acceptable worſhippers of the great Jehovah, we muſt have a realizing faith in the truth of thoſe things:* it is not enough to aſſent to them as true, but he who worſhips God, muſt believe, not only in his exiſtence, but in the truth of his gracious promiſes,† and that he fulfils his word to all them who put their truſt in him, and who expect his gracious preſence and bleſſing. It is the buſineſs of faith to take him at his word; and to expect the bleſſing he has promiſed to give us. The ſpiritual worſhipper enters the Lord's houſe relying on his word of promiſe, praying for the bleſſing promiſed; truſting that the Lord will be as good as his word, and make him feel he is with him of a truth. By this faith the true chriſtian honors the Lord more than by any thing elſe that he can perform. To take the Lord at his word, firmly believing we ſhall have every thing from him, that is good for us, is to pay him ſpiritual and acceptable worſhip; and the more we abound in this holy confidence, the more we ſhall know of his love, and the more we ſhall honor and

‡ Matt. xx. 20. § Heb. xi. 6. * Heb. xi. 1.
† Mark ix. 23.—Luke xvii. 19.

and glorify him. And without faith we cannot worſhip God acceptably at all, nor perform any act of acceptable devotion. The true worſhipper enters into the ſpirit of St. Peter's words, at the houſe of Cornelius; *He that feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him,*‖ &c. But in the next place,

4. To whomſoever faith is given, of the kind before deſcribed, there is alſo holy love¶ produced in ſuch ſouls, both to the Lord himſelf, and the worſhip he has appointed* in his earthly courts; and this is neceſſary to conſtitute our worſhip ſpiritual and acceptable; *David* deſcribes the very heart of every true worſhipper, in theſe words: *Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy houſe, and the place where thy honor dwelleth.*† This ſhews the ſacred delight which a good man has in divine worſhip; and they who feel this ſacred pleaſure, deſire the return of the Sabbath,‡ and their ſpiritual employments in the Houſe of God, as much, nay more, than their neceſſary food; and the ſeveral means which divine grace has appointed, are more deſired by them than much fine gold. In waiting thus before the Lord, they find knowledge increaſed, their underſtandings are more and more enlightened; faith is increaſed in ſtrength and vigour; love kindles into divine delight; and the ſoul ſees, that being in perſon accepted in the Beloved, the humble worſhip it eſſays to render to the Lord, is accepted alſo in the ſame way. But in the next place,

5. Delight,§ alſo enters into the nature of ſpiritual and acceptable worſhip; for by this is the true worſhipper actuated. Solemn delight and ſacred pleaſure in the ſouls of the Lord's people, make them reſemble the worſhip of heaven, in their humble attempts below: and in theſe holy exerciſes all their powers are employed

‖ Acts x. 33, 34. 43. (Charity, i. e. Love).
¶ Gal. v. 6.—I. Cor. xiii. 3.
* Pſalm lxxxiv. 1, 2, 10.
† Pſalm xxvi. 8.
‡ Pſ. xxvii. 4.—Pſ. lxxxiv. 10.
§ Pſ. xxxvii. 4.—xcvii. 12.—xcv. 1. 2.

employed, in prayer and praiſe, in hearing the divine word, and in commemorating the Redeemer's death, their ſouls are engaged in delightful meditation on the wonderful love and aſtoniſhing kindneſs of our God and Saviour. This fills them at the ſame time, with holy pleaſure and deep humiliation—With pleaſure, to ſee their own perſonal intereſt|| in redeeming love; with deep humiliation, at a ſight and ſenſe of their own vileneſs and depravity;¶ and this is perfectly conſiſtent the one with the other. Deep ſelf-loathing on account of our ſinfulneſs, and ſolemn delight in divine worſhip, are feelings which the true worſhipper is well acquainted with: yea, and whoever has felt the humbling influence of the former, will not be long a ſtranger to the latter; for indeed they are conſequent the one on the other; for ſays our Lord himſelf, *He who humbles himſelf ſhall be exalted.** So that if the former is felt, the latter will be enjoyed. Then we may ſay, that ſelf-abaſement and complacency in God, are certainly evidential of ſpirituality in divine worſhip; and the happy ſouls who are bleſt with theſe feelings are of the number of the Lord's true worſhippers. Therefore,

6. Thoſe who thus worſhip God in ſpirit and truth, are bleſt with holy *fervor* in the exerciſe of divine worſhip. They are fervent in prayer, lively in praiſe; and they hear the word for themſelves; as candidates for a happy eternity. They do not go to the Houſe of God to ſleep there, but to engage in divine worſhip, to receive ſpiritual benefit, and to pay unto God their lively thankſgivings for all his mercies. Animated with a ſenſe of the greatneſs of their ſolemn and ſacred employment, their every power awakes into lively exerciſe, and kindles into holy devotion. Yet it muſt be confeſſed, that at times (and alas! too often) they find this dull body a clog that bares them down to earth; yet they are not habitually overcome by its dulneſs; and when they are beſet with its influence

|| Phil. iii. 3. ¶ Rom. vii. 24. * Luke xiv. 11.

fluence, and langour and wearineſs ſeizes them, it is an adverſary, and the moſt unwelcome of all gueſts: and then their language is,—though alas! this dull body is become weary *in* the ſervice of our God, yet we are not weary *of* it: though our fleſh is faint and weary, yet our ſpirits are ſtill willing, and we ardently long to be able to worſhip our heavenly Father perfectly and eternally, as the heavenly hoſt do; this is our ardent deſire and prayer, and we wait and watch for the anſwer of peace §which our God has promiſed to beſtow upon us, with the earneſtneſs of thoſe who watch for the morning; yea with greater ardour than they. But this leads me to obſerve in the next place,

7. That watchfulneſs* in the Houſe of God, is alſo neceſſary to keep up life and ſpirituality in divine worſhip: I mean not to ſay, that we can make ourſelves as lively and ſpiritual as we pleaſe, or that we can give efficacy to the means to make us ſo; but I *do* ſay, that we can and ought to watch and pray againſt vagrancy of thought, and dulneſs and inatention in the means of grace; and without this our hearts will be wandering like the fool's eye, to the ends of the earth, and our worſhip become as profitleſs as the wandering of our hearts is ſinful in the ſight of the Lord: aud as wandering thoughts diſengage our ſouls while we appear before him in his earthly courts, they powerfully tend to make our worſhip to conſiſt of bodily exerciſe only. Surely then, this ſort of worſhip cannot be a ſpiritual ſacrifice, holy and acceptable to God;† but a mere mockery, and an inſult to the Majeſty of Heaven. It is, therefore, abſolutely neceſſary to our being ſpiritual worſhippers, that we keep up a conſtant watch againſt vain thoughts, at all times, but more eſpecially in the Houſe of God. For ſurely we have found to our coſt, that when unwatchfulneſs and inattention have crept on us, and taken us off our guard, ſtupidity and dulneſs have ſeized our ſouls, and we have found no more benefit by the means in

§ Pſ. cxxx. 5. * Luke xii. 37. † Rom. xii. 1, 2.

in which we have been engaged than the ſeats we ſit on. All which, ſhews how neceſſary it is that we ſhould watch as well as pray in the public means of grace; and in thoſe alſo of a private nature, or otherwiſe our worſhip is like to conſiſt of a *form only*.‡ But I muſt obſerve,

8. That all acceptable worſhip is performed in the *Name of Jeſus*, and accepted of the Father through his mediation.* But as this has been touched on by you, my *Civicus*, in your inferences from the obſervations I made in the foregoing part of this dialogue on the Divine Nature and Attributes; it is enough juſt to mention it here. Suffice it to ſay, that the perſons of the true worſhippers are accepted in the Beloved, and ſo is their worſhip. Therefore, all true chriſtians worſhip God in the *Name of Chriſt*, and no other worſhip is, or can be accepted with him, from any one of Adam's fallen family. Conſequently, ſelf-righteous ſouls who truſt in themſelves, and approach God in their own names, are not true worſhippers.

Now, my *Civicus*, what ſay you? has your worſhip conſiſted in a ſound knowledge of God, and a ſaving faith in Jeſus Chriſt? Do you now feel real love to him, and ſpiritual delight in his worſhip? Does that delight enkindle in you a holy fervor, and a conſtant watchfulneſs? If ſo, then are you a regenerate ſoul, born again of the Holy Ghoſt; and a worſhipper of God in ſpirit and in truth.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, your obſervations have awakened within me a mixture of hope and fear. I believe I can ſay, in ſincerity, I feel and enjoy a very ſmall meaſure of each of theſe graces you have now mentioned. That I have had a meaſure of ſpiritual light imparted to my mind, I believe is a reality; for I am ſure I know *that* of the Divine Character, of my own vile heart, and of the Saviour's worth, which lately I was a total ſtranger to. And, if my heart deceives me not, I have a ſmall meaſure of ſpiritual life

‡ II. Tim. iii. 5. * I. John i. 3.—John xv. 16.

life implanted in my ſoul, for I can ſay, I feel delight, fervor, and watchfulneſs; and I believe I have fed on the divine word with great delight; and that a ſavor of the ſame reſts on my ſpirit. But after all it is ſo little, when compared with what it ought to be, that I heſitate to ſay, it is real; but I own I hope it is ſo, and deſire to praiſe my gracious Saviour for ever and ever, for what he has done for me and in me.

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, the ſmallneſs of your graces is no proof at all againſt the reality of them, but the contrary; for in nature, we know, that the ſmalleſt child living, is a real child, and has all the parts of a man, though not the ſtature of a man: ſo grace in the ſoul, the ſmalleſt grain is real, and the change wrought thereby is as real in kind, as that of the greateſt ſaint; though it be not ſo great in degree. There are degrees in ſpiritual growth as well as in natural; hence the apoſtle *John* writes to little children, young men, and fathers in the church of Chriſt.* But the gracious change in the little child, was as real and as ſaving as that in the young man in Chriſt; and that in the young man as genuine as that in the father. Conſequently, my *Civicus*, however ſmall your faith, love, and delight may now be, yet a ſpiritual exiſtence is given you, and the all-important change is real, and you are now a ſpiritual infant, or little child in the divine life: and every one knows that an infant is not born a man, though it has the life, limbs, and members of a man; yet it is but a man in embryo, or imperfect growth. But ſurely no one will ſay it is not of the human ſpeices, becauſe it is an infant; nor will any ſay of a young boy, he is not of human kind, becauſe he is not ſo *tall*, ſo *ſtrong*, or ſo *wiſe* as a man. But every wiſe man knows, and every one of common ſenſe underſtands this, that nature has its growth; the babe grows to a lad, the lad grows to a young man, and the young man at length becomes a father; and thus we are taught by our apoſtle to conceive

* I. John ii. 12 to 14.

ceive of ſpiritual growth. Every father owns his youngeſt babe as his child, as much as he owns the ſon who is arrived at manhood; and indeed, the relation is all the ſame: and it is juſt ſo in grace; the youngeſt infant in the church of Chriſt is as really a child of God, as the perſon grown to ſpiritual manhood; and though he is neither ſo ſpiritually *wiſe, tall,* or *ſtrong,* as a father in Chriſt is, yet his regeneration is as real, his ſtate as ſafe, and his ſalvation as certain. But let us not forget that grace has its growth, and that there is no ſtanding ſtill in the divine life; but where the good work is begun,* there is neceſſarily a going forward; an increaſe in knowledge, in faith, love, and every grace; but here alſo we muſt make diſtinctions, leſt we weaken the hands of ſuch as God would have ſtrengthened. It is clear, that children in natural life, are liable to and actually have their diſorders and ſickneſſes, which in many impede their growth, and makes them look pale and ſickly. Is not this the caſe ſpiritually with many of the real children of grace? Have they not their ſpiritual complaints? Is it not the caſe with them all, in a greater degree or a leſs, that they have their conſtitutional evils,† ſome vile temper or corrupt inclination which mars their growth in a great degree, breaks their peace and defiles their ſouls? No doubt this is the caſe, or the Apoſtle's exhortation to the Hebrews, to lay aſide every weight and the ſin which eaſily beſets them, would be without either meaning or importance; but this cannot be. Therefore, the diſeaſed in ſpirit muſt neither be caſt away nor neglected. Nor is the caſe of ſuch ſouls inconſiſtent (In an abſolute ſenſe) with the real poſſeſſion of divine grace, for though they are ſick they are not dead, and the feeling of their mladies proves they are alive, and thoſe who are ſpiritually alive now, ſhall live for ever. Now, my *Civicus,* I feel perſuaded that you really experience what I ſay; and if ſo, then not a ſhadow of a doubt remains but you are a worſhipper of God in ſpirit and in truth.

* Phil. i. 6. † Heb. xii. 1.

Civicus. I really think, my *Evangeliſta,* that I have a meaſure of this experience, and I wiſh to be truly thankful for it; but I am conſcious that I am but a poor diminutive dwarf notwithſtanding.

Evan. Dear *Civicus,* do you know that the ſcripture holds forth the growth of a ſoul in grace, under the ſimilitude of the progreſſion of light? You may remember what the wiſe man ſays; *That the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day.** The *path* here ſpoken of is the ſpiritual experience of a chriſtian, who is accepted of God in Chriſt, and juſtified in his righteouſneſs imputed to him; and ſanctified by his grace implanted in him. The former, is at once and for ever complete; but the latter, goes forward by degrees, and often to the believer, by imperceptible degrees. But as the light never ſtops in its progreſs, ſo the work of ſanctification, cannot be ſo impeded as not to go forward. True, in the natural world, after the day has dawned, and the morning arrived, clouds and ſtorms may ariſe and tempeſtuous weather may darken the hemiſphere and incommode us much; nevertheleſs, the light proceeds to the meridian, and makes the day, though by imperceptible degrees, to common obſervers, yet to the philoſopher, and the man of obſervation, it is plain and evident, and they know it well. So in the divine life, the work is begun by the divine hand, and the light of heaven begins to ſhine upon the mind, like the twilight of the approaching morning.† At firſt, juſt perceivable, but from that moment it goes forward, though ſometimes by ſlow and imperceptible degrees for a while; for the ſtorms of temptation and the clouds of innate corruptions ſoon darken the light, and make the proſpect of the ſoul very dark and gloomy, and fills the mind with fear. But the Spirit, like a heavenly wind,‡ blows theſe fogs away, and the light of heaven ſhines glorioufly

* Prov. iv. 18. † II. Peter. i. 19. ‡ Cant. iii. 16. John iii. 8.

ouſly on the mind :§ and though for a while the work of grace ſeemed to be impeded, yet it really went forward, for it killed the phariſaic pride and ſelf-conceit, which lay dormant within, and the mind is hereby made more ſelf diffident, and more dependent on Chriſt, more charitable to others, more watchful againſt temptation, and the firſt riſings of ſin. But, this is diſcovered to the mind by freſh communication of divine light, and that light makes this truth clear and plain, and then the mind becomes calm and ſerene, which before was tempeſt toſt,‖ and much diſquieted.

Thus the ſoul proceeds in ſanctification, in the midſt of ſtorms, faith is ſtrengthened, humility increaſed, and peace and love made to grow; and the Saviour becomes more precious than ever. Thus we ſee that the work of grace on the ſoul, is carried on towards perfection, from the moment it is begun, in a gradual way, and that it is not perfected at once, nor fully, till the ſoul puts off the robes of mortality and enters into eternal life.

The path of the juſt, or the chriſtian's growth in grace, is juſtly compared to the ſhining light, both in its commencement, progreſſion, and completion. Agreeable to this, is the idea our Lord gives us of the ſame thing, when he compares it to the growth of corn after it has been ſown in the earth;* he obſerves there is firſt a ſpringing up, then the blade, after that, the corn in the ear: and applies this to the Kingdom of God within us. By all which he ſhews us how he begins his work in our ſouls, and the manner in which he is pleaſed to carry it on, by the light of his word and the teachings of his Spirit. But remember, that ſmall beginnings are real, and therefore not to be deſpiſed or neglected, but nouriſhed and cheriſhed. The ſpiritual babes† muſt be fed with the ſincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby.

For

§ Pſ. xcvii. 11—xxx. 5. ‖ Iſa. liv. 11. * Mark iv. 26 to 28.
† I. Pet. ii. 2.

For in the natural world, a child muſt be long fed and nouriſhed before it becomes a man: and in the ſpiritual world, the babe in grace muſt be long inſtructed and comforted by the goſpel and its precious doctrines and promiſes, even till it is fully perfected in love and holineſs, and ripened for eternal glory. Now my dear *Civicus*, I hope you ſee your features in this mirror I have ſet before you, and that you can diſcern the face of the new creation on your mind; and that, conſequently, you worſhip God in ſpirit and in truth, and that you are one of his adopted children.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, I think I can, as you ſay, ſee my features in this mirror; and though I am conſcious of the remaining of many dark ſpots; yet I truſt they are but the ſpots of my father's children,* for I can now ſay, I believe (though not ſo ſtrongly as I could wiſh) that the new creation† is wrought, and I am a true worſhipper.

Evan. I am glad of it my friend, and permit me now to make another obſervation to you;—though the Lord makes uſe of appointed means to prepare his people for glory; yet it is clear from ſcripture, that he could do it at once, as he did the penitent dying thief on the croſs, if he ſaw good to do ſo; but he chuſes to adopt means, and time, to diſciple them, as well as to cheriſh them, and to make them ſhine as lights in this world, for the good of others. Therefore, they muſt ſuffer trials and temptations, and undergo difficulties, that they may learn more and more to truſt in him, and teach others by their example. It is not his general method, to ripen his people for glory as ſoon as converted (though no doubt a converted ſoul would be taken to heaven, if it left the body the next minute); but as the Lord has choſen his own appointed way, let you and I chearfully ſubmit thereto; and let not my friend expect to arrive at the ſtature of ſpiritual manhood inſtantaneouſly, but progreſſively

* Deut. xxxii. 5, † Gal. vi. 15.

greſſively; and be content to be firſt a babe, then a youth, and ſo grow on to a man in the Lord. Take courage then, dear *Civicus*, and remember your heavenly Father never leaves his children, but leads and feeds them to everlaſting life, even to every individual of them: let this thought fill you with joy and peace in believing.

Civicus. Dear *Evangeliſta*, I feel the divine influence and energy of thoſe truths you have advanced, and muſt acknowledge I have found mental enlargement, ſpiritual conſolation, and an expanſion of ideas while you have opened to me thoſe glorious truths, and I own I am diſpoſed to rejoice, and wiſh to offer praiſe and thankſgiving to our moſt kind and gracious Lord, who has dealt thus bountifully with me. Oh! what ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits.

Evan. I rejoice with my friend, and I am happy to partake of his pleaſure: the end of your converſion is now anſwered. Let us therefore ſing the following

HYMN.

1 FOUNTAIN of eternal bliſs,
Is my bleſt Redeemer, Chriſt;
From him living ſtreams do flow,
Pardon, peace, and glory too.
He redeem'd my guilty ſoul
From the curſe to which I fell,
Call'd me from my native night,
Chas'd my darkneſs, gave me light.

2 I was ruin'd, loſt, and dead,
Sunk in guilt, and life was fled;
And my poor degen'rate ſoul,
Was by nature black and foul:
But I'm waſh'd and made to ſhine,
Through Immanuel's blood divine:
And reſtor'd to life and peace,
Through the great Redeemer's grace.

3 I was naked, poor, and bare,
Fill'd with ſoul-diſtreſſing fear;
But I'm cloth'd with nobleſt dreſs,
Chriſt's pure robe of righteouſneſs:
Shortly in it I ſhall ſhine
In the courts of bliſs divine.
Everlaſting life and peace,
Flow to me through Jeſu's grace.

4 Glorious great incarnate Lord,
Let thy ſoul-reviving word
Be borne in with power divine,
On this needy ſoul of mine.
Let my ſpirit on it feed,
As the way to heaven I ſpeed,
Till I in the arms of Chriſt,
Sing his everlaſting praiſe.

Civicus. Your Hymn* has more than ever ſuprized and pleaſed me, and I am more than ever convinced, that I have been bleſt with the ſame feelings as others, whom I believe are the children of God; and it affords conſolation to my mind, to find thoſe whom I eſteem eminent for piety and chriſtian attainments, have had the ſame feelings and convictions as myſelf; and I am the more ſtrengthened in hope, that my own experience is genuine.

Evan. It is certainly pleaſing and beneficial to hear the experience of others, and to find we have the ſame experience as they; particularly thoſe who have ſtood long in the way, and have given good evidence of their being the Redeemer's real diſciples: this is pleaſing and profitable, and I am happy to have aſſiſted you; but let us not reſt here, but preſs forward to ſtill greater attainments, till we worſhip our Lord perfectly in the heavenly world. And now you have been entertained and benefited by this diſcuſſion on the Divine Nature and perfections, and of the nature of that

* Thoſe are our beſt Hymns of praiſe which expreſs moſt of our mental feelings.

that worſhip which is pleaſing to God; and having been enabled to underſtand thoſe important and ſublime truths, and to come to ſome comfortable perſuaſion of your own intereſt in divine favor and mercy, you can ſubmit to parting with the greater pleaſure.

Civicus. For the ſake of chriſtian propriety, I can certainly ſubmit to part: but to continue our delightful converſation, would be infinitely more pleaſing. But if we muſt part, I ſubmit, and hope to meet you at the lecture, and to return from the Houſe of God after divine worſhip, and renew our converſation.

Evan. To that (if ſpared) I conſent, till then I bid my dear *Civicus* adieu.

Civicus. Dear *Evangelſta*, adieu, and may heavenly peace be with you.

A few OBSERVATIONS for the Reader's Improvement.

1. If ſound conviction and converſion are truly deſcribed in the preceding Dialogues; then we may ſee, that wherever, and to whomſoever, the word of the Lord, or, which is the ſame thing, the Goſpel of Chriſt, is made a ſavor of life unto life; it ſlays human pride,* and ſtrips the ſinner of every other hope, truſt, and confidence, but that of free and full ſalvation by Jeſus only: notwithſtanding all the civility, politeneſs, and morality the awakened perſon may have been brought up in, and practiſed through life: for when ſound conviction enters the mind, the man does not ſay, O Lord, I have always been civil, kind, and obliging, and as good as any of my neighbours; but, O Lord,† I am a vile ſinner; nor do I know any ſaved

* Gal. vi. 14.—Phil. iii. 8, 9. † Job xlii. 5, 6.

one on earth ſo vile as myſelf; and if I am ever ſaved, it will be by an act of inconceivable grace, and without any performances of mine, or any thing that I can do; I have done nothing but ſin, nor can I ever merit the ſmalleſt favor, I muſt be ſaved by mere mercy through Chriſt Jeſus, as the vileſt of the vile, and not for any thing I can ever do. *Eph.* ii. 8, 9.

2. A doctrine like this, will ever, either provoke or ſlay the pride of man.—If God ſet home this humbling doctrine with divine power, then ſinners fall under the conviction, and own their guilt, and implore pardon through the Saviour. But if left to themſelves, their pride ſwells like that of Ethicus in Dialogues I. and II. and they reject with diſdain, the thought of being beholden to grace only for ſalvation. But the ſoul who underſtands the goſpel and believes it, is like Civicus, moſt chearfully† willing to be ſaved in the Lord's own way, without any thing of his own.

3. The ſoul who is thus made willing to be ſaved by Chriſt alone, ſhall be ſaved, and be brought to know it, and rejoice in it. The joy which is derived from a knowledge of intereſt in the great Redemption, is vaſtly ſuperior to any felicity that it is poſſible for a child of mere nature to have any conception of. Therefore, the gracious ſoul is the only partaker of true felicity; for the Lord is the ſtrength of the mind, and the portion of the ſoul forever.‡

4. The ſoul who has partook of this knowledge, and felt its divine ſweets, feels an inſatiable thirſt after more and greater diſcoveries of the knowledge of God, the plan of ſalvation, the perſon and love of Chriſt, and the work of the Holy Spirit; together with a greater acquaintance with every part of the word of God.—*Pſalm* xix 9, 10.—*Phil.* iii. 10 to 12.

5. If this be true of all the children of God; then thoſe hearers of the goſpel in theſe days who content themſelves with hearing, and reſt in formality;* have

† Acts xvi 14, 23. ‡ Pſalm lxxiii. 25, 26, 28.—xxxiv. 11, 12.
* I. Theſ. i. 5. compared with II. Tim. iii. 5.

never felt the ſaving energy of the word, and are conſequently yet in a ſtate of nature. Mere attendance on the externals of religion, is as different from the real enjoyment of it, as ſeeing of food when ſtarving, and the feeding on it to full ſatisfaction. Seeing of food will not nouriſh the body, any more than hearing of medicine will cure diſeaſes; and hearing of ſalvation without partaking of its benefits is equally as vain. A form of godlineſs without the power, is like a body without a ſoul; for a dead body ſoon turns to putrefaction, and becomes loathſome to us, ſo is mere formality in the ſight of God: and a formaliſt,§ is as far from the kingdom of heaven, as a drunkard or a ſwearer. Therefore, dear reader, whoever thou art, aſk thy heart, as in the ſight of God, whether thou haſt any thing in religion more than mere formality; and ſupplicate divine mercy, that the goſpel may reach thy ſoul in its ſaving energy and renovating influence, for if thou haſt already felt it, no hurt will enſue by thy feeling more of it, and if thou die without it, thou art loſt for ever.—*John* iii. 3. But,

6. Let no ſinner deſpair of pardon who is deſirous to obtain it: for ſurely no ſeeker of divine mercy will ever be rejected; * none ever yet were caſt out who ſincerely ſought it, nor ſhall any ſuch ever be. Therefore, let no ſin-ſick ſoul be diſcouraged, but let them ariſe and go to Jeſus, for he caſts out none who come to him,† however vile they may have been. Sinners of every poſſible deſcription may obtain pardon from the Saviour, by applying to him for it: and his invitation to ſinners is, whoſoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.‡ Therefore,

7. No ſin ſhall prove damning, but final unbelief; he who believes ſhall be ſaved, whatever his former character may have been: but he who believes not ſhall be damned. The wrath of God abides on unbelieving

§ Matt. xxiii. 23. 33. * Iſaiah i. 18.—Mark iii. 28. —I John i. 7. † John vi. 37. ‡ Rev. xxii. 17.

believing rejecters of the glorious goſpel and the ſalvation it holds forth to guilty men. For there is no other way of ſalvation, and if this be rejected, the rejectors muſt periſh; for there remaineth no more ſacrifice for ſin, but a fearful looking for of judgment, and firy indignation, which will devour all ſuch ſinners againſt divine mercy.

Then, oh my ſoul! what a debtor to mercy art thou? Surely *mercy only* intercepted for thee, mercy only took hold of thee when purſuing madly the road to hell; and ſuch was thy ſtupidity and madneſs, that thou wouldeſt have purſued thy courſe till arrived at the diſmal abodes of eternal deſtruction, had not ſovereign mercy ſtopped thy courſe, turned thy feet into the way of peace, and given the heavenly bent and inclination; and made thee willing in the day of divine power. Faith in Jeſus, is thy own free gift, thou God of love and mercy! and but for this I had periſhed in unbelief. But bleſſed be thy name forever, that thou haſt made me willing, and given me a name and a place among thy redeemed ones. Oh! to grace what a debter am I—For I am now ſure of this, that the mercy which pardons my crimes, can pardon the worſt and the vileſt.—Lord, ſend thy goſpel ſucceſs wherever it is preached, and may all the inhabitants of the earth ſoon hear and know the joyful ſound, as far as it may be thy holy pleaſure. How precious is the name of Jeſus! Jeſus the ſinner's friend; Jeſus the ſinner's Saviour; Jeſus who ſaves to the uttermoſt all who come unto God by him! —Reader, love the Saviour, fly to his arms, and live to his praiſe. May this be my happineſs, O Lord, for thy name ſake. *Amen.*

1 "Jeſus, I love thy charming name,
'Tis muſic to my ear;
Nor to my eyes is light ſo ſweet,
Or friendſhip half ſo dear.

2 Yes, thou art precious to my ſoul,
My tranſport and my truſt;

Jewels

Jewels to thee are gaudy toys,
And gold is ſordid duſt.

3 All my capacious powr's can wiſh,
In thee moſt richly meet,
To make me holy, wiſe and bleſt;
And all that's good or great."

DIALOGUE V.

On the person, work, and offices of the great Redeemer; his humiliation, glorification, and intercession, with the blessed fruits and effects thence resulting to his redeemed people.

Evangelista and Civicus having attended an usual lecture on a week evening, returned from the house of God together, and thus they began to converse.

CIVICUS. We have been favoured once more with a rich repaſt in our father's terreſtial manſion; as uſual, have enjoyed the feaſt without moleſtation, in comfortable circumſtanees, for which we are infinitely indebted to our indulgent and gracious Lord.

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, indeed it was a rich repaſt, I ſpeak from what I have felt, *Paſtorus* has been much to our purpoſe, one would think he had been apprized of our deſign; for he has opened the way to our intended ſubject ſo clearly, that I am conſtrained to feel thankfully for the ſeaſonable aſſiſtance now preſented us.

Civicus. My *Evangeliſta* is not alone in this, I partake of his pleaſure as well as of his gratitnde; *Paſtorus* having opened our way ſo delightfully, I expect I ſhall be favoured with a fuller deſcription of the

the Redeemer's perſon; and a regular diſplay of his perſon and offices. Your promiſe, preſent circumſtances, and my own wiſhes prompt this expectation; I truſt I need not fear a diſappointment.

Evan. That remains to be known, however, I ſhall have no objection to impart to you what I am able upon the ſubject; though I am conſcious it is but very little. And I begin by obſerving,

1. That our Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the choſen and appointed Mediator between God and man.* The divine Father has elected him† to this infinite dignity, and he has voluntarily undertaken it.‡ Chriſt is Mediator by the Father's appointment and his own choice; therefore, for the divine honour, and man's ſalvation, the great Immanuel willingly undertook the office of Mediator, to glorify God and ſave ruined men. In his love and his pity he undertook to redeem us, and bleſſed be his name he has effected his work, and brought ſalvation to us. But,

2. He who undertakes to be Mediator between God and man, muſt be poſſeſſed of infinite dignity, glory, and divinity. This honor is enjoyed by the Saviour of men; for he is the eternal word,§ or the ſecond perſon|| in the glorious Trinity, inheriting the ſame nature, perfections, and attributes as the Father. For the apoſtle Paul ſays, all the fulneſs of the Godhead dwells in him.¶ Another apoſtle tells us, he is the true God and eternal life.** A great variety of paſſages in the old teſtament, which foretell his coming into our world, holds him forth to us as the everlaſting God, and the creator of all things, as the governor of all worlds, and the preſerver of all things. The evangeliſts each of them (and particularly John) ſays, he was in the beginning with God, and that he was

* I. Tim. ii. 5 iv. 17, 18. 19.
§ John i. 1, 2.
¶ Col. ii. 9
† Iſa. xlii. 1 to 5—lxi. 1. 2. 3.—Luke
‡ Pſ. xl. 7, 8.—Heb. x. 6 to 9.
|| I. John v. 12. compared with ver. 7, 9.
** I. John v. 20—Jude 25.

was God; and that all things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made which was made. The ſame teſtimony is repeatedly confirmed over and over through the epiſtles of Paul and Peter; and indeed by every one of the new teſtament writers. St. John in the Revelations, holds him forth to us, as *the firſt and the laſt*,* i. e. *the firſt grand cauſe of all things*, and the laſt end of all things. Which ſhews us, as with a ſun gem, that he is the author of life and death; the judge of quick and dead;† yea, that he is the Lord of heaven and earth, to whom the worſhip, adoration, and homage of angels and men‡ is moſt rightfully due; and to him it muſt be paid. But,

3. Godhead alone cannot redeem (I would ſpeak it with the profoundeſt reverence). It does not appear from any thing in ſcripture, that there could be any redemption§ for fallen man, but by the blood of the Redeemer. But pure Deity cannot ſuffer either death or mutability; for Deity is immortal and impaſſible, but man muſt be redeemed by the ſhedding of blood, even the blood of him who undertakes to redeem, for without ſhedding of blood there could be no remiſſion. Conſequently, it does not appear that pure Deity can be Mediator; or redemption wrought for man, but by taking human nature into union with the divine. This is done in the perſon of Chriſt; for he is God and Man in two diſtinct natures, but one perſon, and in this glorious perſon Deity and humanity are united.‖ This is evident from the apoſtle's teſtimony quoted above, viz: *All the fulneſs of the Godhead dwelleth in him bodily.* i. e. The eternity, immutability, and omnipotence, with every other perfection and attribute of the divine nature, dwells in the humanity of the Redeemer. On this ground Peter ſays to Chriſt, Lord, thou knoweſt ALL things, thou knoweſt that I love thee.¶ Chriſt ſays, *all power in heaven and in earth is in his hand*;** and tells

* Rev. i. 17. † Matt. xxv. 31, 32.—Rom. xiv. 10.
‡ Heb. i. vi.—Phil. ii. 10, 11. § Heb. ix. 22.
‖ John i. 14.—Heb. ii. 16. ¶ John xxi. 17.
** Matt. xxviii. 18.

tells his diſciples, that where two or three are gathered together in his name, he is in the midſt of them;* how many ſoever of theſe aſſemblies there may be throughout the vaſt dominion of God, yet, in the midſt of them all, at the ſame inſtant the divine Immanuel is there; to read every heart,† to know every caſe and character, to ſupply every want of every one of his humble followers; but none beſides Deity, can be in more places than one at the ſame inſtant; but Jeſus is with his people in every place at all times and for ever; therefore it is evident, that the omnipreſent Deity dwells in the humanity, and that Jeſus Chriſt is God and Man in two diſtinct natures, but one perſon.

Civicus. I readily admit, becauſe I am fully convinced, that eternity, omnipotence, omnipreſence, &c. is peculiar to Deity; and that the being who is poſſeſſed of theſe muſt be divine: but for the ſake of a thorough inveſtigation of this important truth permit me to aſſume the diſputant for a few moments, and give me leave to propoſe a queſtion or two to you.

Evan. Uſe your freedom, I agree to your propoſal, and will give you the beſt anſwers I can.—Begin with your firſt queſtion.

Civicus. Pray how can Jeſus Chriſt be that God of whom he is the Son? Is it poſſible to be Father and Son in one and the ſame perſon?

Evan. Your queſtion is curious enough, but as I believe you to be an honeſt inquirer after truth, I will try to give you a ſuitable anſwer. Allow me to obſerve, your query ſeems to ſuggeſt that you have not underſtood my meaning relative to the union of the divine and human natures in the perſon of Chriſt. Remember then, it is the humanity of Chriſt we ſpeak of when we call him the Son of God, and not the

* Matt. xviii. 20. † Rev. ii. 23.—Iſa. lvii. 15.

the divine. It is the human nature, which was miraculouſly begotten by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, and called in ſcripture, by way of eminence and diſtinction, the Son of God. It is very manifeſt that this is the meaning of the evangeliſt Luke in the following words, which were the words of the angel to the mother of our Lord: *The angel ſaid unto her, the Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo, that Holy Thing which ſhall be born of thee, ſhall be called the Son of God.* Nothing can be more plain than this, that the human nature of Jeſus is here meant, and not the divine. It is ſafe then to affirm, that Chriſt is the Son of God after the humanity and not as to the divinity; for in this reſpect, ſuch as the Father is, ſuch is the eternal Logos or Word, i. e. the ſame from everlaſting to everlaſting.

Civicus. But will you not grant that the ſaints are alſo Sons of God; and it would ſeem as if they were ſo in as eminent a ſenſe, as you make the man Jeſus to be.

Evan. Not ſo verily, for the ſaints, as well as other men, by nature are the creatures of God by ordinary generation (and conſequently born in ſin) but Chriſt's human nature was begotten miraculouſly by the Holy Ghoſt in an extraordinary way; and it is on this account that the man Chriſt Jeſus, who was born of a virgin, eminently *the Son of God.* Obſerve the words of Matthew the evangeliſt; *Now the birth of Jeſus Chriſt was on this wiſe; when his mother was eſpouſed to Joſeph, before they came together, ſhe was found with child of the Holy Ghoſt.*† This fact is confirmed to Joſeph by a meſſenger from God, who tells him, the ſame thing, and likewiſe informs him, (and us in the ſame words) that he ſhall be called *Immanuel,* to ſhew he is God with us;‡ and *Jeſus,* to manifeſt that he is a Saviour of ſinful men. Here we ſee the union of the

* Luke i. 35. † Matt. i. 18. 20. ‡ Matt. i. 23.

the divine and human natures in the Redeemer's perſon; therefore, he is called Immanuel or God with us, and being ſo, he is able to ſave his people from their ſins.* On this account he is called Jeſus, which ſignifies a Saviour. Now my *Civicus*, I hope you diſcern the truth and propriety of the doctrine, that Jeſus is the Son of God in his manhood, in a way infinitely ſuperior to any other being whatever.

Civicus. Agreed, ſo far, but the ſaints are alſo children of God, you know, and to this you ſcarcely ſaid a word in anſwer.

Evan. They are ſo, being renewed by divine grace and adopted into the family of God, but none of them had a miraculous birth as Chriſt had, nor are they united to Deity as Chriſt is. I ſhould ſuppoſe this muſt be clear to yourſelf.

Civicus. True, it is ſo; and I preſume you perceive my meaning by my queries, i. e. to diſcover the truth more clearly, that if I ever hear it attacked I may be able to defend it, but more eſpecially that I may have more clear views of it myſelf.

Evan. Very good motives indeed. But let us now go on to obſerve,

4. That divinity and humanity being united in the perſon of Chriſt,† he is thereby a ſuitable, and an all-ſufficient Mediator,‡ exactly ſuch an one as it was requiſite he ſhould be, both for the divine honour, and our ſalvation. For unleſs he was a divine perſon he could not be an all-ſufficient Saviour; and if he was not really man, he could not atone for his people's ſins, for Deity can neither ſuffer nor die, or be mutable. But Chriſt having divine power, he can confer infinite merit, worth, and dignity, on all that he does as Mediator for his people. In his human nature he could both ſuffer and die, and riſe from the dead to make atonement for his people, and to ſave them for ever. For,

* Matt. i. 21. † Iſa. ix. 6. ‡ Heb. vii. 25.

5. In his mediatorial capacity, he ſuſtains for his people the offices of Prophet, Prieſt, and King. But let me notice his prieſtly office* firſt. In this capacity he has undertaken to ſatisfy divine juſtice in their room and ſtead, by paying to the law that perfect, pure and ſpotleſs obedience which it requires, and which they have not paid, and as fallen creatures, never can pay; by offering himſelf a ſacrifice, or ſin-offering to God the divine Father, and thereby to make atonement for the ſins of all them who are deſtined to eternal glory. To effect this, their ſins were imputed to him; and for which he ſuffered and died; and his righteouſneſs is imputed to them, by which they are juſtified and ſaved. But in the next place,

6. He ſuſtains alſo the office of a Prophet;† in virtue of this, he teaches his people by his word and ſpirit, and makes them wiſe unto ſalvation. In order to this, he convinces them of their fallen condition, and perſuades them powerfully and makes them accept willingly ſalvation by himſelf as his own free gift. By the energy of his ſpirit with his word he makes them know their miſery, and ſhews them the remedy he has himſelf provided, and inclines them to chuſe ſalvation in his own way. His powerful teaching makes them to know the goſpel, and to underſtand its divine contents, and by it they find the true knowledge of God, and of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and thus he fulfils his prophetical office for all his redeemed ones. But in the next place,

7. He ſuſtains alſo the office of King‡ in Sion. In virtue of this he ſubjects the ſaints to his government, reigns in their hearts, rules their lives, and enables them to live to his praiſe. They own him as their Lord, and themſelves as his diſciples and followers. He is the King which the Father has ſet upon

* Pſalm cx. 4.—Heb. v. 5. and vii. 21—Zec. vi 12. 13

† Deut. xviii. 15. compared with John i. 45—Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37, 38. ‡ Pſalm ii. 6. & xcv. 3.—Iſa. xxxii. 1, 2.—Jer. xxiii. 5.—Zec. ix. 9.—Johnxii. 15.

upon his holy hill; having a native right as God, and a delegated right as Mediator, to rule as head over all things to his church.* As the Lord of conſcience, he alone has a right to demand our implicit faith in whatever he teaches, and to bind the ſouls of men to obedience, to whatever he makes known. All his ſaints rejoice in his reign, and it is to them a ſource of conſolation, that he does and ſhall reign in their hearts, in his church, and ſoon over all the earth, and every foe be completely ſubdued. For in his kingly character, he firſt ſubdues his people and makes them his willing diſciples;† while by his word and ſpirit he carrys on his conqueſts, till all the nations ſubmit to his government; and the whole earth be ruled by him‡ as his own church. Meanwhile he protects his ſaints, provides for them, and forſakes them not. In his kingly character he has appointed the chriſtian ſabbath, and the means and ordinances of his houſe, for his people's comfort and preparation for glory. Thus he manifeſts his authority, reigns in the ſaints, rules in his church, carries on his conqueſts in the world, and will do ſo till he is King of nations as well as of ſaints. In the mean time he feeds his ſheep§ in the green paſtures of his ordinances, till he crowns them with glory in heaven. As King of Zion, he is alſo the chief Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls, and chriſtian miniſters are raiſed up and qualified by him for their work as his under Shepherds, to lead his lambs and ſheep to thoſe heavenly paſtures which his love has prepared for them. As the Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls, he has an excluſive right to rule the conſcience, nor is there any other Lord but him, to whom man is accountable for what he believes. There is no Head of the Chriſtian Church but Jeſus: Chriſt only is King in Zion; and as SAINTS, we own no other Lord but him. But in the next place,

8. In conſequence of his mediatorial character, his life on earth was a ſtate of deep humiliation and abaſement;

* Eph. i. 22. † Pſalm cx. 3. ‡ Rev. xi. 15.
§ Pſalm xxiii. 2, 3.

ment ; for having undertaken to redeem his church, he muſt ſubmit to ſuffering both of reproach and pain, to obey and ſuffer was a principle part of his work on earth. For as a ſubſtitute of his people, he muſt repair the breach they had made, by ſatisfying divine juſtice and magnifying the holy law which they have broken, and reſtoring its honours. Therefore, from his manger-cradle to his croſs, he was purſued by adverſity in ſome form or other, till he aſcended to glory. Being made in his humanity under the law,* to redeem his people who were under the law, that they may receive the adoption of ſons ; he muſt, to effect that, ſubmit to a life of ſorrow, and a painful and ſhameful death, even the tormenting death of the croſs. All of theſe he certainly has performed : and now I ſhall inſtance a few particulars, how he has effected it.

1. He has fulfilled all righteouſneſs,† moral, ceremonial, and intermediate. All righteouſneſs which the moral law required, he has paid for his people, in their ſtead. The law's requirements of Adam's children, were perfect, pure, and unſinning obedience;‡ but this not one of them ever paid (or as fallen creatures) ever can. But this the bleſſed Jeſus has yielded to the full ; his life was a courſe of pure and ſpotleſs obedience to all its injunctions in every iota, the utmoſt of its demands were fully ſatisfied, and all its precepts honoured and magnified. He came not to deſtroy either the law or the prophets,§ but to fulfill them, this he has done to perfection. Nor is there the ſmalleſt thing imaginable either by angels or men, which he has left unfiniſhed. Therefore, there is not a ſingle point of obedience left for any believer to perform, as a law-fulfiller; Chriſt has obeyed it perfectly, and fulfilled it completely. Now it can demand nothing of the believer,‖ as a condition of eternal life, for this our divine Surety has paid to the full. But,

* Gal. iv. 4, 5. † Matt. iii. 15—Luke iii. 21.
‡ Exod. xx. 1 to 17 ; explained Matt. v. 27, 28, & 48.
§ Matt. v. 17. ‖ Eph. ii. 8, 9.

2. He fulfilled all righteouſneſs ceremonially.* Was the levitical ritual the appointment of Jehovah? Did it require obedience to all its injunctions, of the worſhippers of God, under that diſpenſation as long as it remained?† It did, and Jeſus was obedient to it, he gave it all its demands even to the laſt mite. Did it require circumciſion? Behold, Jeſus was circumciſed, at the time and in the manner which this law required. Did this law require the worſhip of God to be carried on and kept up in conformity to divine direction? In this alſo, Jeſus complied, and conſtantly obſerved its order. Therefore, thoſe whom he healed of the leproſy by miracle, muſt go and offer to the prieſt the things which Moſes commanded, and by the Saviour's order, though himſelf did the work. Did this law require various offerings and a continual ſacrifice. Behold! Jeſus made himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of his people,‡ and offered himſelf without ſpot to God the divine Father, and ſo paid all his people's debts. Had this law its High Prieſt who went into the holy of holies by ſacrifical blood? Behold, Jeſus is our great High Prieſt,§ who is gone into the holieſt of all, by his own blood, having made way for us who believe, to follow him thither. The Kingdom of Heaven is by him opened to all believers. Were the worſhippers under that diſpenſation to be ſprinkled with ſacrifical blood to render them and their worſhip acceptable? They were; Jeſus alſo, waſhes his people in his own blood,‖ which was ſhed to take away their guilt, and to cleanſe them from all ſin. Was the ſacrifice to be offered without the camp? So Jeſus ſuffered without the Gate of Jeruſalem.¶ Yea all the ſacrifices and offerings, with the **waſhings, &c. pointed to the coming Meſſiah, and were typical of him in his redeeming work—To him they pointed, in

* Luke ii. 22 to 24.

† As long as it remained pointing to the Meſſiah to come.

‡ Heb. x. 10. 14. § Heb. vii. 26 to 28—x. 18.

‖ Heb. ix 20 to 24—I. John i. 7.—Rev. v. 9 I. Peter i. 2.

¶ Heb. xiii. 12. ** Heb. ix. 8 to 14.

in him they are accompliſhed, and by him brought to an end. For when he offered himſelf without ſpot to God, all things which were preſignified by theſe, were finiſhed.* Therefore, the dear Redeemer bowed his dying head, and ſaid *it is finiſhed.* But I obſerve,

3. He fulfilled all righteouſneſs in the intermediate diſpenſation. John Baptiſt was our Lord's forerunner, to announce to his countrymen the Redeemer's approach, and the ſetting up of the evangelic diſpenſation, or Kingdom of our Lord. John had his peculiar work and light, which had been foretold by the prophets; and now the prediction had its accompliſhment in his perſon and works. He came preaching repentance, ſaying, the Kingdom of God is at hand. Indeed the King of Zion was come, and his Kingdom about to be ſet up in our world. By divine direction this venerable perſon baptiſed all who profeſſed to be his diſciples. This was right, becauſe divinely appointed. To ſhew us an example of obedience, to the divine appointments, as well as to fulfil all righteouſneſs, Jeſus was baptized of him who wanted himſelf to be baptized.

Thus did he ſhew that he came not to deſtroy either the law or the prophets, but to fulfil every part of them; by regular and divinely appointed ſteps to advance from his humiliation to his exaltation; and to ſet up his evangelic kingdom in that way of righteouſenſs which infinite wiſdom had appointed.

But he needed not to do all this for himſelf, for the eternal Word was ever and for ever perfectly and infinitely happy *in* himſelf, and had he choſen it, he would have been ſo if the whole of Adam's race had been doomed to ſuffer eternally the dire reward of their guilt and ſin. But he choſe to have his delights with the children of men,† and that from everlaſting; and for this reaſon he undertook to redeem the Church of

* John xix. 30.—Dan. ix. 24. † Prov. viii. 31.

of God, and to reſtore them to the divine image and favour, and for this end his mediatorial work in the ſtate of his humiliation was performed; and their redemption effected.* But I have ſpoken chiefly of his fulfilling all righteouſneſs actively by his life, I muſt now ſpeak of his paſſive work.

We have noticed that his active obedience, both moral, ceremonial, and intermediate, was perfect, complete, and in every reſpect fully adequate to all the demands of law and juſtice; and hereby the law is honored and magnified,† in a way infinitely ſuperior to any thing that could have been poſſible for Adam or any of his offspring ever to have performed, even if they had never ſinned. For the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is the righteouſneſs of the God-man Mediator, and therefore infinitely meritorious and dignifying; but the righteouſneſs of innocent man is but the righteouſneſs of a finite creature, and nothing more than was his duty; conſequently, no merit could attach itſelf to it, nor any one be benefitted by it but the individual that performs it. Not ſo the righteouſneſs of Immanuel, for that ſatisfies infinite juſtice, and avails for the ſalvation of all the numberleſs millions of God's elect.‡ For, as Mediator, he is their ſubſtitute, not only to obey for them, but alſo to ſuffer and die for them. For ſin having entered, death eternal muſt have enſued had not Jeſus taken on him the ſins of all the ſaved. But the Deity foreſaw man's fallen and ruined condition, and the eternal Word conſented to take on him by imputation, the ſins of all the choſen of the Father, and to place his righteouſneſs, both active and paſſive, to their account; this was accepted by the divine Father, and the wonderful, the aſtoniſhing transfer was made in the everlaſting counſels of the eternal Jehovah: and oh! amazing love! The Saviour charged himſelf with our ſins, took them all upon him, and made his human ſoul a ſin-offering to divine juſtice, and the Father placed *his*

* Heb. ix. 22, 28. † Iſa. xlii. 21. ‡ Rev. vii. 9.

his righteouſneſs to his people's account,* and accepted the offering in their room and ſtead. Thus, in the everlaſting counſel, Chriſt was a Lamb ſlain for his people (in purpoſe and deſign) not only from the foundation of the world, but from everlaſting ages.

The divine purpoſe of redemption, was firſt faintly made known to our original parents juſt after their fall, under the idea of the Woman's Seed;† and afterwards to Abraham and the patriarchs more clearly; and much clearer ſtill by the moſaical diſpenſation, as already noticed. The prophets had ſtill clearer views of the promiſed Meſſiah, both of his perſon and work: and God ſpake clearly by them, at ſundry times and in divers manners; but at laſt he ſpake to us by his Son,‡ whom he has made heir and Lord of all things, and judge of quick and dead, as well as the Saviour of men. But to fulfil all this, the eternal Word took fleſh,§ i. e. the nature of man upon him, and clothed himſelf in human clay; and after having lived on earth the ſet time: at the appointed moment he voluntarily gave himſelf into the hands of barbarous and cruel men.‖ As he had fulfilled all righteouſneſs in his life, and every prophecy reſpecting it, from his cradle to his croſs; ſo now every thing reſpecting his death was fufilled alſo. His ſtripes, his bitter agony, and his cruel death were predicted, and he bore it all; and ſo finiſhed tranſgreſſion made an end of ſin, and brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs.

Now, by him all who believe in him, as the Saviour whom God has appointed, are by his blood redeemed from the curſe of the law which they had broken, and his righteouſneſs is imputed to all, and avails for all who are brought to put their truſt in him for their full and complete ſalvation. His death procures them eternal life, his croſs procures them crowns of eternal glory, his crucifixion ſecures their everlaſting felicity.

* I. Cor. i. 30. † Gen. iii. 15. ‡ Heb. i. 1, 2.
§ Heb. ii. 14. 16. ‖ John x. 17, 18.

felicity. Oh aſtoniſhing love! Oh wonderful grace! Oh bleſſed Saviour! And is redemption wrought by thy hands? Let us love thee with all our hearts and live for ever to thy praiſe and glory. This is the doctrine of the old teſtament and the new. Iſaiah ſays, by his ſtripes we are healed;*—that he was bruiſed for our iniquities;—that the chaſtiſement of our peace was on him;—that he bore our ſins and carried our griefs; i. e. the cauſes of them, which you know are our ſins. Daniel ſays, he was cut off for the ſins of his people;† and all the old teſtament writers ſpeak the ſame language. Our Lord himſelf tells us, he laid down his life for his ſheep;—that he came that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. The Apoſtle Paul ſays over and over, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins. Alſo, that he is made to believers wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification, and redemption: that he is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one who believes in him:—that by *him all* who believe are juſtified freely from all things, from which they could not be juſtified by the law of Moſes.‡ Conſequently, the whole church of God and every believing ſoul, as St. Peter ſays, is the purchaſe of the Redeemer's precious blood; whoſe ſins are all atoned for, by the death of Chriſt. He died to redeem them, and they are the purchaſe of his agonies, his ſweat, and precious blood.

Thus redemption is effected by the perſon and work of Chriſt, and through this redemption are all repenting ſinners ſaved. Surely the great Redeemer ſhines with infinite glory when viewed in this light; a glory that out-ſhines ten thouſand ſuns, and before which all other glories are but comparative darkneſs. But if we go on to ſet the firſt and ſecond Adam in contraſt, the glories of Jeſus will ſhine on our minds with double luſtre.

* Iſa. liii. 4, 5. † Dan. ix. 26.

‡ Acts xiii .39.——Rom. iii. 24.

luſtre. For, as the two great covenant heads, who were ſo by divine appointment, we may compare and contraſt them to much advantage; and while the darkneſs of the former grows ten fold by compariſon, the luſtre of the latter will be ten thouſand fold increaſed by that means; and thus we ſhall ſee the more ſtrikingly the glory of the great Redeemer's perſon and work. Obſerve,

1. Adam being the firſt man, was made pure and perfect, in the divine image,* i. e. in knowledge, righteouſneſs, and true holineſs, having every grace and virtue in perfection; but was a voluntary agent, having ſufficient power to know and to do the will of God. As ſuch, he was the appointed covenant head of all his poſterity, ſtanding in their ſtead, in their law place, and for them to give a true teſt of real and ſincere obedience, when attacked by temptation. But, though he might and could have ſtood firmly in that ſtate of rectitude and purity; yet, againſt the divine command,† and the light of his own mind, he yielded to temptation, ſinned againſt God, and brought guilt, degeneracy, and death on all his poſterity. Now the guilt of that capital crime deſcends from father to ſon till time ſhall be no more: for the impurity of this ſin, like the moſt deadly poiſon ſpreads miſery and death over the whole race of Adam; it has marred the whole terreſtrial creation. But,

2. Chriſt is the covenant head of all the elect of God.‡ In that capacity he has wrought deliverance for his people, and by the virtue and efficacy of his mediatorial performances and ſufferings, he has brought ſalvation unto them, and turned away the curſe from them, under which they had fallen by the firſt ſin. For, as the guilt of Adam's ſin brought degeneracy and death on all his deſcendants; ſo, on the contrary, the merit of Chriſt's active and paſſive obedience

* Gen. i. 26, 27. † Gen. iii. 6, 17, 18, 19—Rom. v. 12.
‡ Iſa. xlii. 6.—xlix. 8.

obedience has insured eternal life to every believer* in every generation, and in all the world.

The first Adam by his offence brought ruin and misery on all mankind ;† the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, brought recovery to all the church of God, and confers on every believer present peace and pardon, future felicity, and everlasting glory.‡

The first Adam by sin brought the curse on all the world ;§ But Jesus Christ brings all that terrestrial felicity which is enjoyed on earth ; and in virtue of his redemption, the sun shines on the evil and on the good, and the rain descends on the just and on the unjust. But finally his gospel shall captivate the great mass of mankind,|| and convert the earth to a terrestrial paradise.

All those who live and die under the influence of the fall of the first Adam, are in a state of perdition, and sink to hell ; but all those who are united by faith to Jesus Christ, the second Adam, rise to a state of justification on earth, and of glorification in heaven.

The fall of the first Adam violated the principles of eternal justice, and opened the flood-gates of sin and iniquity, corrupted the whole race of mankind, and brought universal depravity on every child of that fallen family ; and this is the source of universal ruin and misery.** But the obedience and sufferings of the great Redeemer restores honor and satisfaction to divine justice in full, magnifies the righteous law of God, and turns away divine vengance ;†† restores an infinite number to holiness of heart and life, and thereby stems the torrents of immorality ; lights up in our degenerate world, a vast number of shining examples whose holy lives are to others as so many directories to holiness and true virtue ; and for their sakes

* John x. 27, 28. † Rom. v. 16. ‡ Rom. vi. 23.
§ Rom. v. 18. || Rev. xi, 15.——Dan. vii. 27.
Rev. xx. 6. ** Gen. iii. 17. 18.
†† Isa. xliv. 21 to 23.—chap. liii. 10 to 12.

ſakes the world is preſerved* till every elect ſoul is fully prepared by renovating grace for eternal glory. This I think, ſets the glories of the Mediator's perſon and works, in a point of view which is affecting, aſtoniſhing, and glorious!

Civicus. Truly ſo, indeed, I am pleaſed with the glorious ſight, and have felt both enlargement and delight while you have been ſpeaking on this moſt ſublime and intereſting ſubject. But be ſo good as to allow me to aſk you another queſtion. Pray how am I to conceive of the redeemed? are they the whole maſs of mankind, or are they a number choſen to be redeemed? Or, in other words, as the divine Father has choſen the perſon of the Redeemer, has he alſo choſen the perſons of the redeemed?

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, I take it for granted, that you will reſt aſſured of the truth of whatever the holy ſcriptures declare; and if ſo, I have no doubt of ſatiſfying you fully on this point.

Civicus. You have rightly judged, for I certainly do, and I truſt ever ſhall bow to ſcripture authority, and what you prove by it I hope ever to receive, and that with cordiality of mind.

Evan. That is right; I am perſuaded then, that you will perceive clearly, that as the divine Father has choſen the perſon of the Redeemer, ſo alſo, he has choſen the perſons of the redeemed in him.† This doctrine is clearly ſtated in the ſcriptures.—That God has a people whom he has choſen, is taught by Moſes and the prophets; by Chriſt himſelf‡ and the apoſtles; and ſurely if this be proved, I ſhall gain your free conſent.

Civicus. If you prove this, I can have nothing to ſay againſt it, but ſhall eſteem it my happineſs and honor to embrace and avow whatever God has revealed in his word; but in order to this, I muſt have it proved,

* Gen. xviii. 32.——I. Sam. ii. 8.——Iſa. xliii. 4.
† Rom. ix. 11.——Eph. i 4.——Rom. viii. 28, 29, 30.
‡Jo hn vi 37. chap. x. 27, 28. chap. xvii. 9.

proved, for though I reſpect my friend with cordiality and ſincere affection, yet I can take nothing on truſt of ſo important a nature as this. Permit me, therefore, to requeſt, that you proceed to your proof.

Evan. Moſt readily;—but here it may be proper to obſerve, that the choice of Abraham's deſcendants to be the viſible church of God on earth, is certainly meant to inſtruct us in the knowledge and belief that God has choſen a certain number of mankind to compoſe his church on earth, there to be nouriſhed and prepared for the full enjoyment of him in heaven. It cannot be ſuppoſed (I ſhould think) that God ſelected the nation of the Jews from all other nations for political purpoſes only; that ſeems to be a low and ſordid idea, unworthy of infinite wiſdom. But if we underſtand Moſes aright in Deut. x. 15, 16 *The Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and* choſe *their ſeed after them, even you* ABOVE ALL PEOPLE, *as it is this day.* Theſe words ſhew clearly, that the divine choice of theſe people and their forefathers, contained ſomething in it infinitely above any thing merely political* and terreſtrial, even the infinite love of God: and though there is reaſon to believe, that many Jews lived and died in ſin; (for they are not ALL Iſrael who are of Iſrael) yet there is ſufficient ground to believe, that a great number of theſe were actually choſen to eternal life, as the end, and to the enjoyment of divine ordinances, as the means. For their example was deſigned of God to be a light to the dark heathen world (at leaſt to as many as had eyes to ſee it) to guide them to the true worſhip of God, and check the groſs idolatry of the times.

This then, is the doctrine which the divine choice of the Iſraelitiſh nation teaches us, viz: A great number of them were choſen to eternal life in Chriſt the expected Meſſiah; and the line of election ran principally amongſt them as a nation; therefore, it was the divine

* Iſa. xliii. 12, 21.—Luke i. 68 to 74.

divine good pleaſure (and that was the only cauſe)* that the true worſhip and viſible church ſhould exiſt among them. The ſacrifices and ceremonies of divine worſhip which God then appointed, for a certain time, were deſigned to inſtruct them to expect the Meſſiah's coming,† and to fore-ſhew them the glories of his perſon, and the deſign of his advent; and alſo to keep them from the evil cuſtoms and abominable practices of the heathens around them, and to ſeparate them to himſelf, as a peculiar people zealous of good works. To ſhew the world, that the grace of the Almighty leads all the partakers of it to a life of true holineſs as the way, and to heaven as the end.

This was a conſtant inſtruction in righteouſneſs to the ſurrounding nations, a conſtant condemnation of their evil practices, and theſe ſeem to be ſome of the chief things intended by the divine choice of theſe people. I ſhould think, my *Civicus*, that this muſt be evident to you.

Civicus. I freely acknowledge, that you appear to have reaſon and ſcripture on your ſide, ſo far; but you have not led me through the prophets yet, much leſs through the new teſtament; but have the goodneſs to proceed.

Evan. That is my intention.—Obſerve then, that the attentive and enlightened mind may perceive, as plainly as any thing can be perceived, that the doctrine of divine diſcrimination runs through the Pſalms of David.‡ Hence the benedictions§ on God's true worſhippers, and the friends of the expected Meſſiah and his diſciples, and the awful imprecations of divine vengeance‖ on his, and their enemies. For David in his official capacity,¶ was a type of Chriſt; and his imprecations on the enemies of Chriſt and his church, ſeem

* Deut. vii. 6. 7, 8. † Heb. x. 1.

‡ Pſa. iv. 3.—xxxvii. 28—xxxiii. 12—lxv. 4—lxxxiv. 4. — xcvii. 10 to 12. § Pſa. ciii. 3, 4, 5.—cvi. 3. — cxii. 1 to 4—cxv. 13. ‖ Pſa. cix. 6 to 20.

¶ Jer. xxxiii. 15 to the end.

ſeem to me to be prophetical of the doom of all thoſe who live and die the oppoſers of Chriſt and ſalvation by him. Hence too, his earneſt prayers for the proſperity and happineſs of God's church and choſen. The doctrine of the Pſalms is clearly this. God then had, and he now has, a number true worſhippers who believed and truſted in the great Mediator, and theſe are the Lord's choſen, his Zion, and his Jeruſalem; and to them is all conceivable bleſſedneſs promiſed, and it will in due time and order be imparted.

The ſame doctrine is found to run through the propheſies of Iſaiah,* of Jeremiah,† and the other prophets.

In the new teſtament, our Lord's diſciples are called by him, his Sheep,‡ and the wicked (who die in their ſin) are by him called Goats.§ Likewiſe, he calls them *his elect*;‖ i. e. his choſen people. The apoſtle Paul calls the elect, *veſſels of mercy*,¶ afore prepared unto glory: but the finally impenitent, whom Chriſt calls Goats, the apoſtle calls veſſels of diſhonour; and alſo, veſſels of wrath fitted to deſtruction.** The veſſels of wrath, *made ſo by their own ſin*, are likewiſe characterized by the appellation of *the ſeed of the Serpent*; and our Lord calls them the children of the wicked one.†† Theſe wilfully, willingly, and determinedly perſiſt in their rebellion againſt God, and the way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; and never repent of their crimes, but perſiſt in them till they periſh in their ſin. Indeed, this would be the caſe of all Adam's fallen family, were not diſtinguiſhing grace to make the important change in them neceſſary to ſalvation; for fallen nature is now bent to evil, *only, continually, and perpetually*. But thoſe who are ſaved are ſaved by grace, through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to them; and

* Iſa. vi 9 to 11. chap. xxvi 20, 21

† Jer. xxxi. 3, 11. chap. xxxiii. 11, 14.

‡ John, x. 27. § Matt. xxv. 33. ‖ Matt. xxiv. 31.

¶ Rom. ix. 23. ** Rom. ix. 22.

†† Matt. xiii. 38.

and the mere good pleaſure of the divine will, is the only moving cauſe of it.

This is the doctrine the ſcriptures teach; therefore, the ſcope of the goſpel is ſummarily this: God, who ſees all things from eternity to eternity with infinite preciſion, fore-knew perfectly the fallen condition of man, provided redemption for him, in the perſon of the Mediator. In him choſe to everlaſting life, an infinite, but to him a certain and definite number;* which none but himſelf can number, out of every generation on earth, from the beginning to the end of time; and this infinite number is to the Almighty ſo *certain* and *definite*, that they will never be added too, and can never be diminiſhed. For theſe, the great Redeemer became a ſubſtitute, and for them put away ſin by the ſacrifice of himſelf;† brought in everlaſting righteouſneſs; and they all will be drawn by divine power and grace, to believe in and rely on the Saviour, and ſtand complete before God with full acceptance; being regenerated by the Holy Spirit, juſtified in the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, adopted into the family of heaven, ſealed and ſanctified by the Holy Ghoſt,‡ and in divine ſtrength are enabled to perſevere to the end. All this is the effect of free, ſovereign, and unmerited grace; through the redemption which Chriſt has finiſhed.

But I now begin to think of parting, and at our next interview, to converſe more particularly on regeneration and effectual calling.

Civicus. Have patience a little, my Evangeliſta, I have one queſtion more to aſk you before we part. You have evidently held forth to me the doctrine of particular redemption; but pray you, would not divine grace be much more magnified by placing all men without exception in a ſalvable ſtate? And could not the redemption of Chriſt avail for all, as well as for ſome? And, if ſo, why not?

Evan.

* II. Tim. ii 19, 20—John xvii. 12. chap. vi. 39. 40. 44, 64.

† Heb. ix. 26. ‡ Eph. i. 13.

Evan. I acknowledge, that ſuch a doctrine as you now ſuggeſt, is to be found in the creed of Arminius and his diſciples, but I am ſure not in the ſcriptures of truth; and for that reaſon, I reject it altogether. Imagine not that free grace is to be judged of by the numbers it ſaves from the ruins of the fall, ſo much as it is from the characters and conditions of thoſe whom it ſaves,

We have before proved, that man, as a fallen ſinner, is conſequently under the curſe of the violated law. Thoſe who are partakers of ſalvation, were not entitled to it for any merit of their own, for they had none, but as all other men are ſo are they, i. e. fallen and guilty: none had any right to expect mercy from God for any thing they ever did or ever can do. Therefore, it would have been but juſt in the Almighty to have rewarded all men according to their deſerts; then all muſt have periſhed. Grace is infinitely glorious, and above all conception magnified, in ſaving the objects of its own choice from among the fallen family of apoſtate Adam. Therefore, talk no longer of its being more magnified than it is, for it is not to be conceived of by a *partial* reſtoration of ALL, but by the *complete** ſalvation of thoſe who are the objects of its choice, who might juſtly have been doomed to hell.

But you aſk, could not the redemption of Chriſt avail for all, as well as for ſome? No doubt of that, if God ſaw good ſo to appoint; for it not only can, but actually does avail for all the purpoſes to which it is deſigned. Therefore it is, that all whom the Almighty intends to ſave, are ſaved by it. But what right have you and I to ſay to God, why, or what doeſt thou? Have we any demand on him for any ſervice we have done him? Surely this you will not ſay. Then aſk no more, why ſhould it not avail for ALL: wonder at and adore the grace that ſaves ANY through it; for ſurely it is inconceivably great.

But

* Heb. vii. 25.—I. Theſ. i. 4, 5—II. Theſ. ii. 13.

But, what is it you mean by placing all men in a ſalvable ſtate? Do you clearly underſtand this matter?

Civicus. By a ſalvable ſtate I mean a poſſibility of being ſaved, and that the redemption of Chriſt has ſo far availed for all men, that they may be ſaved if they will. For the curſe of Adam's ſin being removed from all men by the death of Chriſt, at leaſt ſo far that all may be ſaved, if they will believe and repent; and none will be puniſhed for original ſin only. This is what I mean by a ſalvable ſtate.

Evan. I thought you meant this. But do you not include in it, that man now has it in his own power to turn to God when he pleaſes?

Civicus. Certainly the idea of a ſalvable ſtate includes this, or elſe it can mean nothing; for to talk of a poſſibility of being ſaved, with a power to apply to the Saviour, muſt be a contradiction in terms.

Evan. Juſt ſo, and worſe than that, the whole ſcheme contradicts the expreſs words of Chriſt himſelf on this ſubject; for he tells us plainly, that no man *can* come unto me, except the Father *draw* him.* The power to believe and repent, comes not from the human will, or any human agency, but from God, and from him only. But this proves not your notion of the partial ſalvation of all the human race, but of the certain ſalvation of all thoſe who believe and repent. For that power which works faith and repentance in any ſinner's ſoul, is divine; and the believing and repenting ſinner's ſalvation is not a *may be*, but a *certainty*. Did you ever read or hear of a ſingle individual who turned and repented without the ſpecial influences of the Holy Ghoſt? I am perſuaded you never did, nor any other perſon; nor was there ever a ſingle inſtance of the kind, nor will there ever be. For ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, is not natural to fallen man, nor to men in any ſenſe; for the law of nature is, ſalvation by human merit, and for a man's own righteouſneſs

* John vi. 44. 65.

righteouſneſs and perſonal obedience; and not by a ſubſtitute. All carnal men retain this bias till God by the power of his word and Spirit ſlays it, and gives the mind an evangelic direction. No natural man thinks of being beholden to another for righteouſneſs; his own merit is all he thinks of, to find acceptance with God. But you know this is as contrary to every goſpel principle, as light is to darkneſs, or heaven to hell. Therefore, your ſalvable ſtate is a *nonentity*, or worſe; it is an *ignis fatuus*, calculated to lead men into the bogs of carnal ſecurity, and to blow them up with phariſaic pride.

As to your poſſibility of being ſaved, I anſwer; to God all things are poſſible; if he chuſes, nothing can hinder the accompliſhment of his choice; and if he refuſes, none can influence him to alter his mind. He does all his pleaſure in heaven and on earth; for he is in *one mind*,* and none can turn him; and what his ſoul deſireth *even that* he doeth. Salvation is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth,† but of God who ſheweth mercy. Conſequently, if he wills that all men ſhall be ſaved, no doubt they will infallibly be ſo; for nothing can prevent what he abſolutely wills. But the ſcripture informs us, that the wicked ſhall be turned into hell and all the nations who forget God; i. e. all finally impenitent ſinners: and we read that Judas,‡ Dives,§ Ananias,‖ Saphira, &c. are gone there already; and our Lord ſays, that in the laſt great judgment, he will ſay to many who lived and died in their hoſtility to him;—Depart ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels.¶ Therefore, ſalvation is the free gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; and all the cavils of all the cavillers that ever lived, or ever ſhall live, can never alter it in the ſmalleſt matter. The damnation of the wicked, is the righteous judgment of God for the crimes

* Job. xxiii. 13.—Pſa. xxxiii. 11.—Iſa. xlvi. 10.
† Rom. ix. 16. ‡ Acts i. 26.——John xvii. 12.
§ Luke xvi. 23. ‖ Acts v. 5. 10.
¶ Matt. xxv. 41. 46.

crimes of thoſe who fall under it, and their wilful perſiſting therein. The judgment of the wicked is the due reward of their evil deeds, and God is juſt and righteous in the puniſhment of their crimes. But he ſaves freely and of his own good pleaſure, all who come to him through Chriſt, to the honour of the riches of his grace and mercy. But your ſalvable ſtate is a mere bankrupt buſineſs, or a compounding matter between the infinite God, and miſerable ſinners; and its tendency is evidently this: God has done his part to redeem and ſave man, and he muſt do the reſt; and ſo betwixt both the breach is made up in the imagination of ſuch deluded men. This is the eſſence of your ſalvable ſtate, and I make no doubt but you mean as much when you uſe the terms.

Civicus. Certainly, I do mean to hold out that idea by the uſe of theſe terms; and is not the plain meaning of the following ſcriptures a proof of what I have ſaid:—God willeth not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance;—Chriſt is the Saviour of all men:—he taſted death for every man. Our Lord himſelf ſays, ask and ye ſhall receive, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you. Are not theſe the declarations of ſcripture?

Evan. Doubtleſs they are, and there are others of a ſimilar tendency, and to underſtand their true import is of infinite importance. But I have before noticed to you, this ſelf-evident truth, that to *will* to be ſaved by Chriſt only (and there is no other way of ſalvation) is above nature in its utmoſt efforts:* and unleſs you can prove this monſtrous propoſition, viz: that natural men can do ſupernatural works, and effect that for which they have no capacity; your ſalvable ſtate is a noſtrum of no value; and a plaiſter that will not ſtick; it is an imaginary ſomething which leads men farther and farther into error, and little doubt can remain, that its pernicious tendency has led many into the dead ſea of phariſaic deluſion. For

* John i. 13.—Matt. xi. 25 to 27.

For the ſcriptures you have quoted to prove this falſe poſiton, have a very different meaning. They certainly intend ſomething very intereſting and important, and it ſeems to be as follows :

1ſt. It is of an inviting nature,* to ſinners to turn from their evil ways.

2d. It is declaratory, that thoſe who return ſhall find mercy,† whatever their crimes may have been.

3d. That every repenting ſinner is intereſted in the death of Chriſt,‡ and not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain ſalvation by him.§

4th. That to will to be ſaved by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, is a proof that ſuch are accepted with God.‖ There never was a ſingle ſinner who willed to be ſaved in the goſpel way, but was actually ſaved ; and the ſcriptures you have quoted are to be underſtood in this way.

I hope from this time you will ſee the propriety of what I have advanced.

Civicus. I am digging for truth as they do for precious ore, and 'tis for that purpoſe, you know, that I aſſumed the diſputant ; but you may aſſure yourſelf I ſee where the truth lies, and rejoice in the diſcovery.

But I too, begin to think of parting for the preſent. Farewell, dear *Evangeliſta.*

Evan. Dear *Civicus,* farewell, till our next meeting.

DIALOGUE

* As Iſaiah i. 18.—chap. lv. 6, 7. † John vi. 37.
‡ Acts v. 31. § I. Theſſ. v. 9. ‖ John vi. 44, 65.

DIALOGUE VI.

On the exaltation of Chriſt, and the Benefits which flow from the Redemption he has effected.

EVANGELISTA. Dear *Civicus*, I am happy to be ſpared to the return of another opportunity to recommence our uſeful and pleaſing converſation.

Civicus. I am equally delighted with the pleaſing enjoyment, and am impatiently deſirous to have your obſervations begun.

Evan. I am willing to oblige you; and therefore obſerve,

1. Jeſus Chriſt having finiſhed the work* which in his humiliation the divine Father had appointed him to perform, both in his active and paſſive obedience; he aroſe from the dead,† burſt the barriers of the grave, came forth, and ſhewed himſelf to his ſorrowful diſciples and comforted them with his preſence and benedictions for forty days.‡ He then, in their preſence, and on the predetermined ſpot,§ commanded the clouds to eſcort him to heaven: and they obeyed his mandate, and liſted him to the right hand of the Majeſty on high. No doubt he was welcomed into the celeſtial courts with the loud ſhouts of the angelic hoſts, and the ſongs of the redeemed already in heaven, from the foundation of the world; and I think I hear the muſic and the ſong.

ANGELS.

LIFT up your heads O ye gates,
And be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors,
And the King of Glory ſhall come in.

RESPONSE

* John xix. 30 & xvii. 4. † Matt. xxviii. 6.—Mark xvi. 6. Luke xxiv. 6.—John xx. 14 to 18 ‡ Acts i. 3.
§ Acts i. 9, 10, 11.

RESPONSE ASKING.

Who is the King of Glory?

ANSWER.

The Lord ſtrong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle!

ENCORE.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Even lift them up, ye everlaſting doors,
And the King of Glory ſhall come in.

RESPONSE.

Who is the King of Glory?

SAINT'S REPLY.

The Lord of Hoſts, he is the King of Glory!
Even him who hath loved us,
And waſhed us from our ſins
In his own moſt precious blood:
To him give we glory;
For he hath redeemed us, and made us
Kings and prieſts unto God, and
We ſhall reign with him for ever.*

Thus our great Immanuel is welcomed to the heavenly manſions, and there is he crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords, i. e. the univerſal Lord of all; and enthroned on the right hand of God.† All worlds and all creatures are ſubjected to his dominion; and an innumerable company of angels and men are to be his willing ſubjects; and thoſe who will not ſubmit to his ſceptre, ſhall bow to his rod.‡ *For all the angels of God* MUST *worſhip him*;§ and all thoſe who are ſaved by him, ſhall chearfully ſubmit to him, and freely own him as their Saviour and Lord. In his exhaltation then, he is the Lord of life and glory,‖ the arbitrer of

* Pſa. xxiv. 7 to 10.—Rev. v. 9 to the end.
† Acts ii. 33. 36—Phil. ii. 9. ‡ Pſa. ii. 9.—lxxxix. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 29—xii. 5. § Heb. i. 6. ‖ Heb. i. 3 9, 10.

of divine providence, and the judge of quick and dead.* Having redeemed his people, he is engaged to make them ALL the partakers of the benefits of his death and ſufferings, and to bring them all to reign with him.

His preſence in heaven is prevalent with God, and the ſcars of his wounds are vocal, and this is their demand: *Father, we will, that the ſouls purchaſed by blood divine ſhall all be called by effectual grace and converted to thee; be pardoned, juſtified, adopted and ſanctified; and finally glorified with thee.*

Beſides, Chriſt as Lord of all, has all power in heaven and earth in his hands, and he ſaves whomſoever he wills to be ſaved:† therefore, thoſe whom he intercedes for, are infallibly certain of the benefits of his redemption, and of the crowns he has ſecured for them in the world of glory. Let us ſing—

"He ever lives to intercede
Before his Father's face;
Give him, my ſoul, thy cauſe to plead,
Nor doubt the Father's grace."

WATTS.

But 2. From his exalted throne in glory, he ſends forth his ſpirit with his word‡, and calls in ſucceſſion his ſcattered and ſtraying ſheep from their wanderings and their carnality, gives them ears to hear his voice, and hearts to underſtand his word: powerfully allures and inclines them to bear and know the Goſpel; and thereby begets in them a feeling ſenſe of their ſin and miſery; and makes them willing to be ſaved by him in his own way. Where this is effected in any ſoul, there converſion is actually wrought; and all ſuch ſouls are turned from ſin and ſelf to Chriſt and holineſs, and deſtined to eternal glory.

Regeneration is one of the capital benefits which flows

* Matt. xxv 31. 34, 40. † John vi. 21, 22. & xvii. 24.
‡ Acts i. 4, 5.---iv. 31 to 33. & x. 44.——Matt. xxviii. 20.

flows from electing love,* through the redemption which Chriſt has wrought. Nor have any a right to claim an intereſt in his death, but thoſe who are born of the Holy Spirit.† This heavenly birth‡ is a work, in which none is an agent but the divine power; human agency can effect nothing here, either totally or partially, it is wholly wrought by the Holy Ghoſt. The partakers of this eſſential and all-important change, are as paſſive in it as an infant in its own formation, or as the matter of which the world is made was, in its own formation. Therefore it is, that the ſaints are ſaid to be created anew in Chriſt Jeſus,§ unto good works. Thoſe to whom the divine privilege of ſonſhip is given, are born (ſays John the apoſtle) not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Theſe words hold forth this very evident truth; that the nature of this work beſpeaks it to be divine; wrought by the immediate agency of the Holy Spirit. For the children of God are the paſſive recipients of the divine bounty, in this great change. But I obſerve in the next place,

3. That this change is eſſential to ſalvation. For our Lord himſelf declares, *Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.*|| He has no native meetneſs for it, nor any capability of enjoying it; his carnal propenſities muſt be ſlain, and a ſpiritual capability to enjoy God and glorify him, muſt be imparted to him. Without this, no man can enjoy true happineſs, either in the preſent life, or the life to come; for holineſs and happineſs are inſeperably connected, nor can they be parted; for a God of unſpotted purity and holineſs can have no communion with impurity and ſin, nor impure ſinners with a God of ſpotleſs purity.¶ Therefore, in order that his own children may be brought to that happineſs to which they are appointed, it is eſſentially neceſſary that they be born from

* Rom. viii. 29. † Rom. viii. 9. ‡ John i. 12.
§ Eph. ii. 10. || John iii. 3. ¶ Heb. xii. 14.

from above; for it is this which conſtitutes their meetneſs for glory. Conſequently, all who go to heaven are prepared for it by this heavenly birth, in the preſent life; none can go there without it. All thoſe who grow up to be capable of the exerciſe of reaſon, and to diſcern good from evil, or ſin from virtue, muſt not only be thus renewed in the ſpirit of their minds by the Holy Spirit, but they muſt give evidence of it* in their lives and conduct. By their good fruits of piety and true holineſs, they muſt evince their relationſhip to the King of Kings, and prove their regeneration to be real, by a life of new obedience, that they may be as evidently known to be the diſciples of Chriſt, as a good tree is by the fruit that it bears. But, this fruit of true holineſs can never be borne by a carnal heart, for though a natural man may be outwardly moral, civil, and ſtrictly honeſt to his neighbours; yet, if he has nothing but the poliſh of nature and education, he is deſtitute of faith and love, and the true knowledge of God; and is, conſequently, a corrupt ſinner,† before him who ſeeth not as man ſeeth. It is not in the power of moral ſuaſion, or a virtuous education to influence the heart of man to bring forth the fruits of faith, love, and new obedience. This is not the produce of nature, but it is communicated to the ſouls of believers by divine influence. Conſequently, a man muſt be bleſt with the graces of faith and love, before he can bring forth the fruits thereof. But theſe graces are imparted in regeneration. Therefore, all who go to heaven muſt be born again. However, leſt I ſhould weaken the hands of any who are already weak, let me obſerve to you,

4. By what internal marks and evidences we may know this work is begun in ourſelves. Here I would ſay, that it begins in deep conviction of our fallen and guilty ſtate by nature and practice; the renewed ſoul is made to feel his loſt condition, and to ſee the abſolute need of being brought out of it. He is alſo enabled

* Gal. v. 22 to 26. † Rom. xiv. 23.

enabled to diſcover, that he is, of himſelf, without righteouſneſs, without ſtrength, and without God in the world; and being made deeply ſenſible of his ſin and miſery, the renewed ſoul is helped to underſtand that Jeſus is an all-ſufficient Saviour: he is likewiſe inclined to hope and truſt that Jeſus can and will ſave him; and therefore, is enabled to put all his truſt in him for ſalvation. The Redeemer is diſcovered to the mind of the convinced ſinner, as the good phyſician, who can heal his maladies, and reſtore health and cure to him, ſave him to the uttermoſt,* and bring him to glory. Knowing his ſinful condition, the ruin he is expoſed to, and that Chriſt only can ſave him, he is diſpoſed and inclined voluntarily to chuſe ſalvation as the free gift of God, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, without any thing of his own: he rejects all other confidence,† and reſts only on the Saviour for acceptance with God, and eternal life. The ſoul who has this experience, is a perſon who has felt the mighty change. For all this, is in itſelf above the power of nature to effect; it is the produce of the divine agency. It conſiſts in a ſpiritual illumination,‡ which makes theſe diſcoveries to the mind: and ſpiritual vivification,‖ which reſtores the ſoul to heavenly life, and creates within the graces of faith, love, humility, ſound repentance, and every grace and virtue neceſſary to conſtitute the new creature, and to give to the mind a heavenly meetneſs, a heavenly direction, and godlikeneſs.

It conſiſts alſo, in ſpiritual mortification;§ by which they die to ſin, and ſelf-righteouſneſs. The dominion of ſin is taken away; and, though they are not freed from ſinful infirmities, they are not the ſervants of ſin; nor do they make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſt thereof; nor have they a proud opinion of their own goodneſs, for they know, that of themſelves they have none. They do not ſay, they are as good as

* Heb. vii. 25. † Gal. vi. 14. & ii. 19, 20.
‡ I. Cor. ii. 14, 15. ‖ I. Pet. i. 23.
§ Col. iii. 5.—Rom. vi. 2, 7.—I. Peter ii. 24.

as any of their neighbours; for they know they are by nature, as vile as the vileſt; and they account themſelves the chief of ſinners. They glory in nothing in themſelves; but Chriſt is their glory, their truſt, and their boaſt; for from him they derive the whole of their ſalvation.

Now, that call which draws a ſinner's ſoul from ſelf and ſin, muſt be an effectual call indeed; and it really is ſo, for it is the call of God.

Can you ſee your own features in this mirror, my *Civicus*?

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, I think I can; for if to be brought from ſin and ſelf, to truſt alone in Chriſt for ſalvation, be a divine change; then I can ſay, I am the ſubject of that change. This transformation is begun in me, and I am as certain as I am of any thing, that it is a work of divine power. For, you know, I withſtood the light as long as I was able, and I ſhould have remained eternally in my deluſion, had not God undeceived me. Therefore, I ſcruple not to ſay, I have felt this change; and I am ſure it is a work of divine power, and to God only be the praiſe. I aſcribe it all to divine mercy and matchleſs grace, as the cauſe; and to the Divine Spirit's energy, as the effector of the work: and, if my heart deceives me not, I deſire to be ſaved both from ſin and ſelf, and to live a life of evangelic holineſs, in faith and love. To bring forth the fruits of righteouſneſs which are by Jeſus Chriſt, to the glory and praiſe of God. I humbly truſt that grace and ſtrength will be given me, to enable me thus to live and walk. But I ſee and feel that all this muſt come from God.

I am ready to ſay, that thoſe who imbibe and teach, that men have power of their own to turn to God when they pleaſe; are propagators of a vile abſurdity; and that they are not to be regarded in this. I own and aſſert, that men have power to uſe the means which God has appointed to bring thoſe who believe to be partakers of the ſalvation which is in Chriſt: i. e. they can hear the

the word, and join in the worſhip of God; they can leave off their immoral practices and evil courſes: the liar can learn to ſpeak the truth; the drunkard can learn to be ſober; the diſhoneſt man can learn not to do injury to his neighbour; and the ſwearer can leave off his hateful oaths and curſes. Every man can uſe the means of grace (who lives where they are granted) inſtead of profaning the Lord's-day. Theſe things men can do, and to ſuch as wait at wiſdom's gates,* eternal mercy promiſes to bleſs them.

But renovation is a ſupernatural work, which none but God can effect. All this I ſee and feel, as certainly as any thing in exiſtence; and therefore, I aſſert it, as a known and tried fact, that real converſion is eſſential to ſalvation; and, that it is wrought by divine and invincible grace; and my heart feels the moſt powerful acquieſcence with this eſſential truth.

Evan. Your anſwer and obſervations yield me great pleaſure and ſatisfaction; I perceive by it an exemplification of the words of the wiſe man, for he ſays, the path of the juſt (or the juſtified) is as the ſhining light.† You were firſt enlightened to ſee your ſin and danger, and were alarmed at your ſtate; you were then laid low in ſelf-abaſement; ſtripped of all your ſuppoſed goodneſs; brought naked, poor, and helpleſs to the Saviour; and made willing to be ſaved freely and fully by him. At length you were enabled to perceive hope of your ſalvation, to put your truſt in him, and you have found conſolation. By a conſtant attendance on the means of grace, your views of the way of ſalvation have increaſed; and now your ſoul has been felicitated with the aſſurance of your being renewed by grace; and, ſeeing your calling, you may know your election of God.‡ Thus are you brought forth to behold the day-light of ſpecial favor. Now you have the beſt comment on the words before quoted:

‡ Prov. ix. 5, 6.—Iſa. xl. 31. † Prov. iv. 18.

‡ II. Peter i. 10.

quoted: i. e. your own experience of their fulfilment. You have been led to embrace this glorious truth, and this will have a ſalutary tendency to ſtay your mind on the Lord, and to ſettle you firm in the faith, againſt all the blaſts of error which blow around you; and to quicken you in your march to the heavenly Jeruſalem.

Civicus. I find it has theſe happy effects on my mind; for by being enabled to diſcern the real import of this moſt intereſting truth, I find I can the better judge of my real ſtate, and diſcern the more clearly whether the work is really begun in me or no: this has a very ſalutary tendency. Beſides, it is truly pleaſant to be enabled to know the truth in this moſt important matter. I find it fortifies and enlivens my mind, and I feel pleaſure and ſerenity of ſoul in proportion to the light I receive from a diſcernment of this great truth. This leads me to aim at and pray for a continual growth in every grace. I could ſay more, but at preſent adieu.

Evan. Dear *Civicus*, adieu.

DIALOGUE VII.

On the great Article of a Sinner's Juſtification.

CIVICUS. I ſuppoſe, my Evangeliſta, I ſhall now be entertained with your obſervations on a ſinner's juſtification.

Evan. Yes, my friend, that is my intention. Therefore obſerve, that this is a very intereſting and important point in divinity. The great Luther ſaid, that "It is the grand article on which a church ſtands or falls." By which I ſhould ſuppoſe he meant, that the church which holds the pure ſcriptural doctrine of free

free juſtification by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed to believers, is a true and ſound church. But, that thoſe who hold the papiſtical notions of juſtification by works, or human merit, either partially or totally, are no true churches of Chriſt; but falſe pretenders to chriſtianity.

Now if this was the real meaning of this great man (in the ſentence quoted above) I think he was perfectly right in his judgment on this grand point. For the true church of Chriſt is ſaid to be the pillar* and ground of the truth; and the diſciples of Chriſt hold the truth which himſelf and the Apoſtles taught in a pure conſcience.† But there is no truth more clearly taught in all the goſpel than this; that a man is not juſtified by the works of the law,‡ but by the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which is to all, and upon all thoſe who believe,§ without any difference. Therefore, the churches of Chriſt, properly ſo called, and every individual ſaint in them, hold this truth in an enlightened conſcience, as the eye holds the light; and no longer (phariſee and papiſt like) go about ſeeking juſtification as it were by the works of the law;‖ but they ſeek it in a way of God's own appointment: i. e. in an act of ſpecial grace, which imputes to them the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, and which they receive by faith alone. The ſoul who is thus taught and influenced, ſtands on the rock which will weather out, and ſtand againſt all the ſtorms,¶ winds and floods which may be permitted to blow and beat againſt them. But the boaſting phariſee and the papiſtical merit-monger, are both on the quick ſands, and the floods of divine wrath, and the ſtorms of almighty vengeance, will ſweep their Babel building,** and themſelves with it into the depths of the dead ſea. except they take another ſtanding on the *terra firma*,†† above deſcribed.

Civicus.

* I. Tim. iii. 15. † I. Tim. iii. 9. ‡ Gal. ii. 16.
§ Acts xiii. 38, 39.—Rom. iii. 22. ‖ Rom. ix. 32.
¶ Matt. vii. 25. ** Matt. vii. 27.
†† The firm ground.

Civicus. You have taken the right method to awaken my attention, and to ſecure it, I can aſſure you; and I ſhall liſten with critical exactneſs to all you may advance on the ſubject, for it is an important and intereſting one. All we have already diſcuſſed is highly important, yet this ſeems to be peculiarly ſo; I ſhall, therefore, obſerve attentively every word you ſay.

Evan. That is the right way to underſtand what you hear: and it is good and pleaſant to have the attention as wakeful as the importance of the ſubject demands, and I hope that this is your caſe. Therefore, I will now direct your attention to the cauſe of juſtification, the matter of it, and the inſtrument by which we receive it.

1. The cauſe of it:—This is the gracious purpoſe of God; ſo St. Paul tells the believing Romans, in chap. viii. verſes 28, 29, and 30. In theſe verſes the apoſtle aſſerts, that the ſaved of the Lord are predeſtinated to be called; ſaying, whom he did foreknow, them he alſo did predeſtinate, &c. In which words, it is very plain, that the apoſtle means to tell us, that it is the gracious purpoſe and deſign of God, which is the moving cauſe of our juſtification, who believe in Jeſus. Indeed, the thing is ſelf-evident; for if we are juſtified freely by grace, there can be no moving cauſe of it, but the divine will. The juſtification of believers, by the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs to them, is the predetermination of the divine mind from everlaſting. For, whom he predeſtinated, them he alſo called; and whom he called, them he alſo juſtified. i. e. Every one of them whom he did predeſtinate, every one of them he called; and every one whom he calls, he juſtifies; and whom he juſtifies, he glorifies. But the predeterminate will of Jehovah is the grand moving cauſe of all this, or the great fountain from whence it flows. On this ground it is, that the ſame apoſtle tells the believing Epheſians, that they had obtained an inheritance, being predeſtinated (thereto) according to the purpoſe of him who worketh

all things after the counſel of his own will.* Juſtification then, originated in the mind of Deity from everlaſting. The only moving cauſe of it, is the good pleaſure of his own will, who is the maker of all things, and by whom all things conſiſt. So our Lord ſays, it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you the kingdom.† The words of the apoſtle, above quoted, are exactly in point here: being juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption which is in Chriſt Jeſus. By GRACE; i. e. by his mere good pleaſure, as the cauſe, and the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed, as the matter of the believer's juſtification. Which brings me to obſerve more particularly in the next place,

2. What the *matter* of our juſtification is. Here I ſay, it is the righteouſneſs of Chriſt‡ in his active and paſſive obedience; by this the law is magnified and juſtice ſatisfied, and this is to all and upon all them that believe, by divine imputation: and this is that for which God juſtifies all thoſe who believe in Jeſus. For Jeſus, as the ſinner's ſurety, took on himſelf the whole of his people's debt, and for them paid the very laſt mite. It was for them he fulfilled all righteouſneſs and made an end of ſin: for they, as guilty creatures, wanted not only redemption from the curſe of the law, but alſo, a righteouſneſs in which they could appear before God with acceptance, and be juſt in his ſight. Now, the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is that in which they ſtand completely accepted, and fully and freely juſtified and acquitted from every charge that law or juſtice could have brought againſt them; for he is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one who believes in|| him; for he was delivered *to* death for our offences, and raiſed *from* death for our juſtification.¶ By his obedience ſhall many be made righteous. i. e. every believer.

* Eph. i. 11. † Luke. xii. 32. ‡ Rom. iii. 24.
§ Rom. iii. 22. 25, 26. || Rom. x. 4.
¶ Rom. iv. 25——v. 19.

believer. For as the great ſurety of his people, their ſins were charged to his account,* and his righteouſneſs, as their Mediator, is charged to theirs'. Therefore, he is made to his people righteouſneſs; and that by divine imputation: and this righteouſneſs of Jeſus the Mediator, which the divine Father imputes to the believing redeemed, is the matter of their juſtification, or that for which they are accounted and accepted as juſt, the ſame as though they had never ſinned at all.

The ſins of all believers in Chriſt being atoned for by his ſufferings and death, and their perſons being accepted in his righteouſneſs, they can appear before the divine throne as righteous perſons with comfort and joy; for God looks on them in his ſon, and is well pleaſed with them for his righteouſneſs ſake. They are even comely in his ſight, through that comelineſs which Chriſt has put upon them. Being before God perfect, in the ſpotleſs robe which Jeſus has wrought for them; divine juſtice itſelf, ſays of every one of them,—thou art all fair my love, there is no ſpot in thee.† For that divine robe in which they are clad is immaculately pure and ſpotleſs, and the eyes of divine rectitude can ſee no flaw in it. Conſequently, there is now no condemnation‡ to any believer in the Son of God: for, as all died by Adam's ſin, all believers are made alive by Chriſt's righteouſneſs. Therefore, none can lay any charge againſt God's elect,§ that ſhall be of any avail againſt them whatever, for their ſins are all pardoned for Chriſt's ſake, and they are freely and fully juſtified.

The moving cauſe of this, is the divine will; and the matter of it, the Redeemer's righteouſneſs imputed. All this is the mere good pleaſure of God, without any foreſeen goodneſs or worthineſs whatever.

The juſtified are ſealed by the ſpirit to the day of redemption: i. e. they are deſtined to everlaſting glory,

* Iſa. liii. 4, 5, 6.——I. Peter ii. 24. † Cant. iv. 7.
‡ Rom. viii. 1. § Rom. viii. 33

glory, both in ſoul and body, and they ſhall ultimately arrive at it, as ſure as they exiſt. This is the happineſs of every believer, both the weak and the ſtrong; but let us remember it is the happineſs of true believers *only*: for it is the teſtimony of him who is *the truth:* He that believeth not is condemned already.* Therefore, I muſt obſerve,

3. The inſtrumental cauſe of our juſtification is *Faith*; or, it is the hand that receives this bleſſing. For the ſcripture ſays, all they who believe are juſtified from all things, and thoſe who believe not are condemned already.† Therefore, thoſe only are actually juſtified who truly believe. True, they were predeſtinated to juſtification from eternity; but the foreappointing them to this, is the actual purpoſe to do it, and the act which effects that work, is the fulfilment of that purpoſe in time. So, they were predeſigned to be converted, but the work of regeneration did not actually take place till their effectual calling. The divine deſign of doing it was eternal and immutable: conſequently, infallibly certain. But, though the deſign was eternal, the fulfilment of that deſign was, and muſt be, in time; for a man cannot be converted before he exiſts: and it is equally true, that he can neither be juſtified or condemned before he has a being, except in divine fore-knowledge. But that foreknowledge which foreſees the exiſtence of any thing, does not effect the work deſigned, but divine power does that, at the moment appointed for the doing it.

We muſt make this diſtinction, my *Civicus*, or otherwiſe we ſhall run into abſurdities and inconſiſtences; let us remember then, that the purpoſe of doing ſecures that the things deſigned ſhall be done, in due time and order. But the reſolution of the mind to do, is one act, and the performance of that reſolution, is another. This diſtinction is very evident in the words of St. Paul before quoted; for whom he did fore-

* John iii. 18. † John iii. 36.—Rom. v. 1. Heb. xi. 6.——Rom. x. 9 to 11.——Gal. iii. 9. 24.

fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate. If we take theſe words as they are, without twiſting them to ſerve a turn they were never deſigned to ſerve, we ſhall ſee clearly enough, that they teach the doctrine which I have advanced, and ſhew it to be ſound and good: that none can be juſtified who believe not; for our Lord ſays, he that believeth *not*, the wrath of God abideth on him. But a ſtate of pardon and juſtification, and a ſtate of condemnation and wrath, are two ſuch oppoſites, that I ſhould think no man in his ſenſes would aſſert, that they are true of one and the ſame perſon at the ſame time. Then the following is the truth: the people of God are actually juſtified when they truly believe; but their believing is no uncertain contingency, or fortuitous event which may, or may not happen, but a fulfilment of the divine purpoſe, which had from eternity ſecured the fact. Therefore I aſſert, that the divine will is the moving cauſe, and the righteouſneſs of Chriſt the matter of our juſtification; and faith is the hand or inſtrument that receives it; or, it is the hand that lays hold on the Saviour's righteouſneſs, aſſenting to it as that with which God is well pleaſed, and in which the ſoul ſees it can ſtand with acceptance before him, and in which it confides for juſtification.

The mind of the believer is enabled to ſee that this is the only way in which infinite wiſdom ſees good to acquit ſinners of their guilt, and receive them to favor: and being convinced that this is the way of God's chuſing; the believer is enabled to chuſe it alſo, and yield the moſt unfeigned aſſent and conſent to it, as an abſolute fact to be relied on for eternity, that the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, by divine imputation, is to all,* and upon all them who believe, for their complete juſtification.

Being perſuaded, that all thoſe who thus believe in the Saviour, are actually pardoned, juſtified, and accepted of God; the believer is enabled to put in his own individual claim, and to truſt that he alſo is for Chriſt's

* Rom. iii. 22.——I. Cor. i. 30——Rom. iv. 25.

Chriſt's ſake fully acquitted from every charge that the holy law and pure juſtice of the Deity might have charged on him as criminal. Therefore, he flees to the Saviour, and lays hold on his righteouſneſs, as it is held forth in the goſpel; and finds that the Saviour receives him, and that the divine Father acquits him of every charge whatever; and the Holy Spirit ſhews him, that, as a believer in Chriſt, there is NOW no condemnation to him*, nor any in future. But this diſcovery is made to true faith only. It is this diſcovery of the Saviour to the believing ſoul, that enables faith to remove the mountains of guilt and fear, and brings into the mind an evidence of divine acceptance and free pardon, as well as a diſcharge from a ſenſe of all guilt. It is faith that apprehends† and underſtands the Father's imputation of the Son's righteouſneſs, and believes that the man himſelf is conſtituted juſt in the eyes of him who juſtifies freely, even Jehovah himſelf.

Thus is the renewed ſoul perſuaded and enabled to embrace the righteouſneſs of Chriſt by faith, in which he is conſtituted juſt; and actually brought into a ſtate of peace with God, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and this fills the ſoul with conſolation and joy. But this diſcovery never was, nor ever will be made to a ſinner in unbelief. True, juſtification is one thing, and the diſcovery of it to the ſoul, is another; but every juſtified ſinner has a meaſure of this diſcovery, ſufficient to enable the mind at leaſt to hope for acceptance through Christ. For, being juſtified by *faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.‡ It is, therefore, impoſſible to be juſtified in unbelief.

But while I aſſert this, let us remember, that there is an inſeperable connection betwixt predeſtination to life everlaſting, calling by grace, juſtification, and glorification: and that the firſt, infallibly ſecures all the

* Rom. viii. 1. † Rom. i. 17. ‡ Rom. v. 1.

the reſt: and though faith is the hand which receives juſtification, yet it is not faith which juſtifies the ſoul, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt imputed, on which faith depends. The office of faith is (under divine influence) to bring into the mind of the believer, the actual enjoyment of a juſtified ſtate, and the comforts thereof. But, we are not to ſuppoſe that faith conſtitutes our juſtifying righteouſneſs; but that faith lays hold on the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, which is to all, and upon all them who *believe*, not on them who do not believe. Nor is faith the matter of our juſtification, but the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, on which faith lays her hand.

From whence it is clearly inferable, that thoſe who make faith our juſtifying righteouſneſs, are in an egregious error; and turning faith to a purpoſe for which it is not calculated, nor deſigned. For that which conſtitutes a ſinner juſt, muſt be abſolutely perfect and pure, as well as everlaſting. But the believer finds, even after grace received, that there are doubts which frequently ariſe in the mind, and often of a very diſtreſſing nature. Therefore, this faith cannot be that everlaſting righteouſneſs which conſtitutes him juſt before God: for then, impurity and ſin muſt paſs for abſolute purity and perfection, which is abſolutely impoſſible. But the righteouſneſs which juſtifies the ſoul of the believer, is ſpotleſsly perfect, pure, and everlaſting. In this, the believer is complete, and ſtands with acceptance before God, clothed in that pure robe; and the Divine Majeſty looks upon him with as much complacency as the pureſt angels in glory. Yea, the righteouſneſs which juſtifies the believer, is more dignifiying than theirs, for that is only the righteouſneſs of creatures, but the righteouſneſs of the ſaints, is the righteouſneſs of God.

Now, what think you, on this grand and important ſubject?

Civicus. I think it is important indeed; and I conceive of it as a fundamental doctrine, and therefore of the higheſt conſequence. In my mind I have compared

pared it thus: Suppoſe a man in the higheſt affluence, ſinks in the world, and becomes inſolvent; he owes prodigious ſums and is not able to pay a farthing; he is proſecuted and committed to priſon, and muſt remain there till he periſhes, or pays all his debts: the unhappy man is ſeized and ſinks in deſpair, knowing he has nought to pay; but a kind friend, able and willing, voluntarily undertakes to mediate for him, and pay all his debts; he makes his propoſals to the creditor, and they are accepted: he pays the money to the laſt farthing; the bills are all cancelled, and the poor impriſoned debtor is ſet free, as if he had paid all himſelf: for his friend's payment is placed to his account, and the creditor fully ſatisfied. The law allows the tranſaction and the priſoner is ſet free: he alſo having joyfully accepted the kindneſs with unfeigned gratitude, is now as free from any claim from his creditor as if he had never been indebted to him. I conceive, I ſay, that there is a ſimilarity here, to what Jeſus does to his believing people.—But if the debtor had ſtubbornly refuſed to accept this kindneſs, and would not conſent to the transfer, he muſt have remained in priſon till he could pay his debt himſelf, or periſh.—Thoſe who believe not in Chriſt, conſent not to be ſaved by him, and in that ſtate they cannot be juſtified.

This may rebuke the error of thoſe who teach that men are juſtified before believing, on the one hand; and thoſe who make faith our juſtifying righteouſneſs, on the other. For, if faith be the hand that lays hold on the Redeemer's righteouſneſs, we cannot take that hold without the hand of faith. Again, faith itſelf cannot juſtify, any more than the man's conſent could pay his debt. It was not his conſent which paid the creditor but his friend's money; ſo, it is not faith, but the Redeemer's righteouſneſs which juſtifies the believing ſoul. This may rebuke ſupralapſarian rigidity on the one hand, and arminian free will on the other. For the real truth lies between theſe two extreams, as it appears to me.

Evan. Your illuſtration is quite apropos, and I am

much pleaſed with your obſervations; and I truſt it is a proof that you are increaſing in divine knowledge; this is a very great bleſſing, may you increaſe in the enjoyment of it more and more. But be it remembered by us, that after all th- diſcoveries we can make, we know (comparatively) nothing of what may be known of God, in his word and by his works both of providence and grace. But it is a proof that we increaſe in ſaving knowledge, when our new diſcoveries make us more in earneſt to make greater advances, and not to take up with the proud opinion that we know enough already, and that none can teach us better. May you and I be ever kept from this *phariſaic deluſion*, and be ſtill hungering and thirſting to know more and more of God till we enjoy him fully above.

Civicus. Amen; that is my deſire.—I think our next contemplation is to be on divine adoption; I ſhould like to be entertained with it now, if you pleaſe.

Evan. I ſhould like it as well as you, but I think propriety demands that we defer it till our next interview; therefore, excuſe me for the preſent. Dear Civicus, farewell.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, farewell.

DIALOGUE VIII.

On ADOPTION.

EVANGELISTA. Dear Civicus, we are now to contemplate the moſt intereſting and important doctrine of adoption. This, as to its actual fulfilment, is conſequent on calling and juſtification. Divine adoption is a taking of awakened ſinners, whom ſovereign

ſovereign grace had choſen to life from among the ruined family of fallen Adam, and putting them into the family of heaven ;* a numbering them with the renovated and heaven-born children of God ; a making them heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt Jeſus ;† a ſeparating them from their old ſtock Adam, and an engrafting them into Chriſt the living vine. For in conſequence of their election union to Chriſt in eternity, they are in due time vitally united to him by faith and love : and being ſo, they are no longer under the dominion of ſin and the curſe of the law ; for being redeemed by blood divine, and called by heavenly grace, the dominion of ſin is ſlain, the curſe of the law removed, and the ſpirit of bondage to guilty fear is taken away by a manifeſtation of their adoption to their ſouls by the Holy Spirit : thus they are brought into a happy degree of goſpel liberty, and the comfortable ſenſe of their intereſt in adopting grace ; are now no longer reckoned ſtrangers, foreigners, and alliens, but fellow citizens with the ſaints and of the houſhold of God ;‡ not of the unconverted, who are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, but of the number of the called according to the divine purpoſe, and ſet apart for God, as branches of his own renovated family. Now, are they, as heirs of God, made kings and prieſts unto him, and enabled to put off the image of the firſt Adam, and put on that of the ſecond, even the Lord from heaven ; and as they have borne the image of the earthly, now do they bear the image of the heavenly ;§ and Chriſt ſeals on their ſpirits|| by his own, an abiding ſenſe of their adoption ; and makes them ſee that he is their living head, and they the members of his myſtical body : this is the ſacred relation they ſtand in to him, and he forms it himſelf, makes it known to them, and lets them know he is not aſhamed to call them brethren.

Thus are they numbered with the children of God, and

* Gal. iv. 5, 6.—John i. 12—Eph. i. 5. † Rom. viii. 17.
‡ Eph. ii. 19. § I. Cor. xv. 49. § Eph. i. 13.

and owned as the ſons and daughters of the Lord Almighty,* and deſtined to the heavenly inheritance, and will be brought to it as their final home. Being brought into this happy relation, God is their heavenly Father, Jeſus Chriſt is their divine mediator and interceſſor, and the Holy Spirit their comforter and ſanctifier, and by him are they ſealed to everlaſting life. The ſaints are their brethren and ſiſters, and the angels are their guards and protectors† till they have conducted them to the heavenly regions.

All this is the work of free and ſovereign grace, human merit has no place here. But how do you feel on this ſubject, my Civicus?

Civicus. I feel comfortable in the rich belief, and ſee it to be one of the great fundamentals of the goſpel. For I conceive it manifeſts to men one of the greateſt favors of the Almighty. I can contemplate it as a poſſible caſe, that a generous prince, may pardon a rebellious ſubject, and thereby deliver him from merited death. But the ſingle act of pardon only ſets him at liberty, but does not number him with the kings children or bring him into his family, nor is the offender a whit allied to the prince by the ſimple act of pardon. It is alſo poſſible for a man to be arrainged on a charge of capital criminality, and yet be acquitted on trial; but the pardon of the former, nor the acquital of the latter, will put neither of them among the heirs of regal dignity; or make either of them one of the king's children. But the adopted ſaint is become a child of the King of Kings, and a heir to eternal glory. Thoſe who adopt children from among men, account the adopted a part of the family, confer the family name, and make them their heirs. So does our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; yea, he does more, he confers his name and his nature‡ on his adopted children, and gives them an eternal inheritance, makes them partners of his throne, and gives them infinitely more than regal dignity, for he crowns them with eternal life.

But,

* II. Cor. vi. 18. † Heb. i. 14. ‡ II. Peter i. 4.

But, by all this I am diſpoſed to think, that adoption is a greater act of divine grace than pardon or juſtification, ſimply conſidered. But I know this is one of the links of the golden chain of ſalvation which cannot be ſevered from the other; for the choſen are called, the called are juſtified, and the juſtified are adopted, and will be finally glorified. This is infallibly ſecured by the divine decree from eternity, and and actually fullfiled in time. The conſolation which this doctrine inſpires can be underſtood by none but thoſe who enjoy it. To have felt the witneſs of our effectual calling, to ſee our juſtification, and to have the ſpirit of adoption enabling us to call God our Father, is a privilege which none but the real diſciples of Chriſt know any thing at all about. It inſpires that joy and peace which they only can feel, and it yields a pleaſure which is indiſcribable; but this honor have all his ſaints: though they have not all the ſame meaſure of this happy enjoyment, yet the inheritance is theirs; and they ſhall all enjoy it, by an earneſt of it in time, and the full poſſeſſion of it in eternity. Oh wonderful grace! I believe it is conferred on me! even on unworthy me! And, am I a child of the great King! I, who was lately his avowed enemy! A diſciple of Chriſt, who was ſo lately a ſlave of ſatan! Wonder, O Heavens, at this! Surely all the bleſſings of redemption belongs to thoſe who are thus favoured, they are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Chriſt Jeſus.—*Rom.* viii. 17.

Evan. Yes, they are ſo, your obſervations are pertinent and juſt. True, adoption ſeparately conſidered, appears to be the greateſt act of divine grace, when compared with pardon and juſtification; but each flow from the ſame ſource: the grace of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. For election to life eternal, includes the the whole of this; and from hence calling, juſtification, and adoption, and ſanctification flow; and eternal glorification crowns the whole. Every believer is a ſharer in all theſe, the weakeſt as well as the ſtrongeſt;

ſtrongeſt; and though ſome of them, through the remains of unbelief and ſinful doubt, do not enjoy the comforts of it; yet, the bleſſing is theirs; and they have a gratuitous right to enjoy it; and they ought to know, that this holy doctrine is calculated to comfort their ſouls, and fill them with a ſweet and abiding ſenſe of their intereſt in eternal love, and of their being partakers of all the bleſſings of the great redemption. To know this, is to have a begun heaven; and a rich foretaſte of eternal glory.

Now, if my friend has this witneſs within, ſurely he can ſing with me the following appropriate

HYMN.

1. THE Veſſels of grace
Are choſen to life,
From Adam's loſt race,
And ſav'd from their ſtrife
Againſt their Creator;
And turn'd from their ſin,
They feel a new nature
Implanted within.

2. Created anew,
By grace rich and free;
They're then led to view
Their intereſt in thee,
Thou mighty Redeemer,
Whoſe heav'nly light,
Shines in the believer,
And ſets his ſoul right.

3. Thy Spirit ſent home
Thy word with ſuch power,
As made him to come
To thee, the ſame hour;
And own his deception
With ſorrow and ſhame,
Then thou his adoption
Didſt inly proclaim.

4. This act of rich grace,
I gladly now ſee,
And feel it at laſt
Is acted on me;
Drawn now by conſenting
(Dear Lord I am thine)
With humble repenting,
And faith that's divine!

5. I now ſee my guilt
Is all done away;
This witneſs I've felt,
And ſing it with joy;
I ſee my adoption
So ſtrikingly clear;
Surpaſſing conception
My pleaſures now are.

6. The ſon of the King,
I ſee that I am,
And he will ſoon bring
My ſoul to that clime,
Where pleaſures ſupernal,
Unmix'd are enjoy'd;
The bliſs is eternal,
And can't be annoy'd.

Civicus. Well, my Evangeliſta, of all the ſacred ſongs you have yet given me, this ſuits me the beſt; this deſcribes my feelings ſo exactly and pertinently, that it has yielded me the moſt refined pleaſure. I can adopt this language as my own; it is this which makes it ſo truly pleaſant and delightful. I conceive this ſweet and heavenly ſubject will afford to the ſaints matter for an eternal ſong.

Evan. That the matter of all our praiſes ſhould be adapted to our feelings and views, is to me a ſelf-evident truth; for it is this, I conceive, that has the greateſt tendency to make our devotion what it ought to be: i. e. lively and animating. I know you, that you are rather of a lively turn, and being willing to

oblige, I brought forward this Hymn, believing it would ſuit your feelings; and I perceive the pleaſure is mutual. This increaſes the ſatisfaction I have in being uſeful to you.

But I ſee it grows late, and I muſt have done. For the preſent farewell till our next meeting.

Civicus. I ſincerely thank you for your kindneſs. Farewell.

DIALOGUE IX.

On SANCTIFICATION.

CIVICUS. I think, my Evangeliſta, our contemplations are to turn on the important doctrine of ſanctification. It is a ſubject of a very intereſting nature, therefore, I wiſh to have it entered on without loſs of time.

Evan. I am ready to oblige you, therefore I ſhall obſerve,

1. That ſanctification is another capital bleſſing flowing from the love of God, through the redemption of Jeſus Chriſt, to the ſouls of his redeemed people. For he is made to them not only wiſdom and righteouſneſs, but alſo *Sanctification.** They are therefore, ſanctified by the Holy Spirit; and as veſſels of honor, are prepared to ſhine in eternal glory, to enjoy the divine bleſſing and ſmiles; but an holy and ſpotleſs God cannot admit impure ſinners to dwell in his preſence; his children muſt be purified by ſanctifying grace, for this conſtitutes their meetneſs for glory. It is the will of God, ſays the apoſtle, even your ſanctification.† But this leads me to obſerve.

2. That to ſanctify is to *ſet apart* for holy purpoſes. Hence

* I. Cor. i. 30. † I. Theſ. iv. 3. 4.

Hence it is declared that the Lord has *ſet apart* him that is godly for himſelf.* This he did by eternal purpoſe, and in due time he actually fulfils that deſign. He tells us by St. Paul, he has from the beginning *choſen* his people *to ſanctification.*† St. Peter declares the ſame thing, in other words, ſaying, they are elect according to the fore-knowledge of God, through ſanctification of the Spirit, and ſprinkling of the blood of Jeſus. So it is clearly diſcerned, that all the ſaved in Chriſt Jeſus, are not only called, juſtified, and adopted, but ſanctified likewiſe: yea, and it is a material part of ſalvation itſelf, for Chriſt came to ſave his people *from their ſins,*‡ not in them. None can be ſaid to be in a ſtate of ſalvation who is not in a meaſure ſanctified. If we would aſcertain our own ſalvation, we muſt ſee to it, that we grow in ſanctification; for the ſaved from hell give this evidence of their calling by grace, that they are conſequently ſaved from ſin.

Civicus. What then do you mean to ſuggeſt, that ſanctification is in our own power, the work of our own hands, to be carried on at our own pleaſure?

Evan. No, Civicus, that is not my meaning, for that would be a monſtrous falſehood indeed; but I do mean to affirm, that God has appointed means to be made uſe of for that end, and that theſe means are fully within our reach; in the uſe of which he has promiſed to bleſs us with ſanctification itſelf, and the growth of it. But it is not in the power of any of us to ſanctify ourſelves, or to merit it at the hands of God. The work is his own, he begins and carries it on by the energy of his Holy Spirit. He is the author and finiſher of it. But I obſerve,

3. It conſiſts in illumination,§ mortification,‖ and vivification;¶ it is begun in regeneration or effectual calling;

* Pſalm iv. 3. † II Theſſ ii. 13r ‡ Matt. i. 21.
§ Pſalm cxix. 130.—xix. 7.—Prov. iv. 18—John i. 9.
‖ Col. iii. 5.—Rom. viii. 13. ¶ Col. ii. 13. & iii. 5. Gal. v. 6.

calling; the mind is then enlightened to ſee its own guilt and deformity, and made to feel deeply the impoſſibility of being ſaved in a ſtate of nature; this lays the convinced ſinner low at the Redeemer's feet, and ſlays his phariſaic pride and ſelf-righteouſneſs, and empties him of all confidence in the fleſh, and makes him willing to renounce all dependance on any works or performances of his own, and all hope of acceptanc with God for any ſuppoſed merit of his, either now poſſeſſed, or in future to be acquired by him.

Thus ſtripped and emptied of ſelf, the love of ſin is alſo ſlain, and the ſoul becomes dead both to the former and the latter, and is cordially diſpoſed to believe in and rely on the Saviour alone for complete ſalvation and is enabled to ſee that Jeſus can and will ſave him. This is the faith which the Holy Spirit begets, this works by love, and by it the heart is purified. Now the ſoul is enabled to live anew; and the life of ſuch, is a life of faith on the Son of God, who loved his people and gave himſelf for them. Thus are they enabled to glorify God in their hearts and lives, by bringing forth the good fruits of faith and love.

But this work goes forward gradually till it is finiſhed, and the ſoul is taken to heaven. It arrives not at maturity at once, nor with like ſpeed in all. Some, even of the real children of God, are ſuffered to feel much of the corrupt remains of a body of ſin and death,* and have long and many ſtruggles with remaining ſin, and many grievous temptations from the enemy and ſome have made many ſlips, and others very grievous falls, and backſlidings; by which religion has been diſhonored, their own ſouls wounded and diſpirited, and others much grieved: infidels, in conſequence, have increaſed their mockeries, and this has expoſed the objects of them to juſt cenſure; and filled their own ſouls with gall and wormwood for their ſad declenſions. But wherever this work is real,

* Rom. vii. 18, 21, 23, 24.

real, grace will be finally triumphant,* and the ſoul completely ſaved. Others of the called by grace, are favoured with a more ſolid and permanent, and ſome with a rapid growth, which ſoon brings them to ſpiritual manhood, and they are ſoon taken to glory. In all this the Lord works as a ſovereign, and ſhews himſelf to be the great potter, who forms even the veſſels of mercy† as he pleaſes.

It is evident then, that ſantification is a divine work; and of ſuch a nature as none but Deity can effect; for it is altogether ſpiritual, and wrought in the ſouls of thoſe happy perſons who are the participants of it. It is a ſlaying the principles of corrupt nature, and an infuſing the habits of divine grace; by which the mind (who was before dead in ſin and ſhut up in unbelief) is quickened and raiſed to a life of faith, love, and true holineſs. Theſe divine principles thus infuſed, give to the mind a heavenly direction, which before it was a total ſtranger to. But when this divine work commences, the enlightened mind diſcerns that it is the will of God that his people ſhall be ſanctified, and that this work is begun and carried on in the uſe of the appointed means;‡ which means the divine energy renders effectual for that end. It is in the conſtant§ and conſcientious uſe of theſe means we are to expect this important bleſſing. But if we live in the neglect of theſe, we may expect our latent corruptions will ſpring and grow like naughty weeds in a neglected field; and every one knows, who has any reaſon, that neglected fields are ſoon over-run with foul weeds, which ſpoil the growth of the crop: while the well cultivated field repays the huſbandman's toil by ſuitable fruits. Our hearts are likened to a field by our Lord himſelf,‖ and

* This is ſaid to encourage the hope of mourning and repenting backſliders, and to ſtrengthen their weak hands: not to encourage hyprocrites, and lovers of iniquity, or thoſe who make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof.

† Jer. xviii. 6.—Rom. ix. 21.
‡ Rom. x. 17.
§ Heb. x. 22 to 25.—Rom. xiii. 11.
‖ Matt. xiii. 23, 24.

and the appointed means are the culture of that field, which if neglected the weeds grow; but thoſe who uſe them from right motives, are rendered more and more fruitful in every good word and work; and their hearts and affections are given up to God, as well as their lives devoted to his glory.

There is then, an inſeperable conection betwixt the means and the end, and the latter is not to be expected but in the uſe of the former. Therefore, though God does the work himſelf, he does it in his own appointed way, in the uſe of the means which himſelf has preſcribed. Thus, the work of ſanctification appears evidently to be what I have deſcribed above, viz: an illumination by the Divine Spirit; a mortification of ſelf and ſin; a vivification, or reſtoration to ſpiritual life; and a devotedneſs to God, in all holineſs of heart and life.

But to prevent any miſtaken notion, let me obſerve here, the difference betwixt juſtification and ſanctification: and pleaſe to take notice, that *juſtification* is a work which God confers *on us*;* but *ſanctification* is a work which he does *in us*.† The former is complete at once,‡ and forever; but the latter is carried on gradually. The matter of our juſtification is the *righteouſneſs of Chriſt* imputed to us; but *ſanctification*, is the *work of the Holy Spirit* within us. By the former we are delivered from condemnation; by the latter we are reſcued from the *reign of ſin*, and made *internally holy*; a new ſet of affections, deſires, and inclinations are implanted within us, which diſpoſes us to forſake iniquity and purſue holineſs. Juſtification precedes ſanctification, but the latter neceſſarily follows the former, as the *heat of the ſun* follows the *light of the morning*; and indeed, they are inſeperably connected, nor is the firſt granted where the ſecond follows not.

But though it be thus neceſſary to diſtinguiſh between juſtification and ſanctification; yet, we muſt ſay,

* Rom. iii. 22. † Col. i. 27—Acts xv. 9.—I. Cor. vi. 11. II. Theſſ. ii. 13. ‡ Acts xiii. 39.—Heb. x. 14.

ſay, they agree in this, that they both originate in God, and are both effected by his own agency, and flow from his purpoſe of mercy, through the mediation of Jeſus Chriſt. All thoſe who are intereſted in redemption, are juſtified,* adopted, and ſanctified, prior to their entrance into the heavenly world.

The conſequence of this is, that unſanctified and unbelieving ſouls, have no evidence of chriſtianity in them; and ſhould they remain ſo finally, they cannot enter the kingdom of God, but will be caſt out into outer darkneſs, with the unbelieving and abominable. But the called and ſanctified ſoul hath the witneſs within,† both of his calling and election of God; and in proportion as he is enabled to diſcern the carrying on of this work of God within, does his aſſurance of eternal life grow proportionably ſtrong: and his joy and peace in like manner abounds. For the Kingdom of God is within him,‡ ſubjecting him delightfully to its influence, and he finds it to be in righteouſneſs, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt: not in meats, or drinks, or outward obſervances, or any mere tereſtrial enjoyments, but in a conſciouſneſs of intereſt in the favor and regard of his Heavenly Parent. Therefore, let not empty profeſſors preſume on an intereſt in divine favor, while they remain as they are; nor formaliſts or hypocrites imagine they ſhall eſcape the divine frowns; or any preſumptuous ſinner ſuppoſe he ſhall paſs with impunity; for verily, all the unrighteous, who die in their ſin, ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment.§ But let not any believer in Jeſus, however weak, either fear or be diſcouraged; for the weakeſt faith is real, and it will certainly end in eternal ſalvation; for, ſays Peter, *The end of your faith is the ſalvation of your ſouls*||. Same time, weak believers ſhould earneſtly pray for a growth in every grace, and encourage themſelves in the belief, that God accepteth their perſons, and hears

* Rom. viii. 29, 30. † Rom. viii. 16.—I. John v. 10.
‡ Rom. xiv. 17.—I. Cor. iv. 20.
§ Matt. xxv. 46. || I. Peter i. 9.

hears their prayers, and that he will grant them their requeſts; and finally bring them to Zion's happy mount above, the weak as well as the ſtrong. How do you feel on this ſubject, my Civicus?

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, I think I feel a fervent deſire to be ſanctified throughout, body, ſoul, and ſpirit. But to confeſs the truth, I have very lately felt ſuch impure and unholy inclinations, and ſuch ſtrong propenſities to evil, that I begin to fear all is not right, nor can I ſay without ſtrong doubts, whether I have ever felt any thing of this divine work to the preſent moment. But what do you think is the greateſt evidence of a ſanctified ſoul? Or, what is that which puts the matter beyond a doubt that this work is begun?

Evan. Dear Civicus, I thought you had been ſtrong in the faith giving glory to God, and that to feel you are ſanctified but *in part*, was what you expected; and that therefore to feel it, would not have ſhaken you much. But I find you muſt drink of the ſame cup of which all the diſciples of Jeſus have drank, and ſome of them large draughts indeed: i. e. *deep ſorrow* on account of *indwelling ſin.* But your's is not a ſingular caſe, for all the children of God are made to feel more or leſs of it. You aſk what is the greateſt evidence of a ſanctified ſoul, ſhould you not rather aſk, what are the evidences of a work of grace begun, notwithſtanding the feeling of remaining ſin? I think this is a more proper queſtion for you to aſk at preſent, and then, in anſwer to it I would ſay: Are you looking to Chriſt by faith to be ſaved from the love of ſin? Are you praying to him to be ſaved from it? Do you feel any degree of hatred to ſin, and any hearty deſire after holineſs? If ſo, this is certainly of God. The Spirit of Holineſs has implanted theſe feelings within you, and hereby given you proof of the beginning of his ſanctifying work within you.

But, I would likewiſe aſk, are you dependent on the Saviour alone, and as much now as at the firſt? For you muſt know that our juſtification is not the reward of

of our ſanctification, nor are we accepted for our ſanctity; but we are accepted in the Beloved,* and juſtified by his righteouſneſs, to us imputed; and this is the free and unalterable act of divine grace. In juſtification all our ſins are done away, and free pardon extends to all our ſins,† paſt, preſent, and to come. But we muſt come continually to the Saviour, not as holy perſons, but as poor needy creatures, and guilty ſinners to the laſt, as much as at the firſt. You aſk, what is the greateſt evidence of a ſanctified ſoul? or (which is the ſame thing) what is the greateſt degree of ſanctification? Were I to attempt to give you an anſwer to this queſtion, I think I ſhould ſay, it is an entire ſubmiſſion to the will of God; for I conceive that when all the powers of our ſouls are ſweetly ſubjugated to the divine will, there is but a ſtep betwixt us and heaven. But, you ſhould recollect, that this is the will of God, that we believe on him whom he hath ſent; even him, who came that we might have life, and that we might have it more abundantly.

Do you feel an aquieſcence with this diſcovery of the Father's will? and is your heart going out to the Saviour for ſalvation from ſin, as well as the curſe? If ſo, I think this puts the matter beyond a doubt, that this work of purity is begun within you.

But I would obſerve here, that ſanctifying influence felt in the mind, hath effect on all its powers, more eſpecially on the will: and when the will is turned Chriſt-ward, the affections are engaged, and ſin will be a burden, and to be delivered from its influence and ſecret workings, will be to ſuch ſouls the moſt deſirable of all bleſſings. The ſoul who has this experience is undoubtedly a regenerate ſoul: and though he may at times feel the motions of ſin within him, both many and ſtrong, yet theſe are not permitted to break out and reign in the life. I am perſuaded of you, that this is your experience, my Civicus.

Civicus. Ah! little do you know of what I feel; could you know the utmoſt of it, I fear you would not ſay ſo of me.

* Eph. i. 6.—Pſalm ciii. 3. † John vi. 40.—x. 10.

Evan. I don't know that, for I am ſtrongly inclined to believe, that if I did know it all; I ſhould even then be able to ſay truly, I have felt much more of this than ever you did; and for all that, you ſee I am ſtill in the way: and bleſſed be my moſt merciful Saviour, can now rejoice in his love, and read my intereſt in his death. Away with your fears, I know you love the ſongs of our Sion, and I dare ſay if I were to bring forward a ſuitable one, you can ſing. Come let us try, I think the following is quite apropos.

HYMN,

The renewed Soul's longing.

1. ALMIGHTY Immanuel! I'm looking to thee!
From carnal deſires now to be ſet free;
O grant that my bondage may now meet its end,
And I have full freedom to praiſe my beſt Friend.

2. I ſigh for this bleſſing, and *glad ſhould I be,*
To feel my affections cleave cloſely to thee;
To raiſe up indignant againſt every ſin,
And feel thy grace ruling and reigning within.

3. Oh! when ſhall commence that bleſt ſeaſon to me,
When ſins me beſetting, ſhall evermore flee;
And I be once favour'd with my beſt deſire,
To feel that I nought but my Jeſus admire.

4. The law in my members, do thou ſoon deſtroy,
That I in my Saviour may triumph and joy;
And fleſh never gain the leaſt conqueſt again,
But I win the victory, through faith that's divine.

5. Then I all the glory will give unto thee,
Thou mighty Redeemer! and gladly will ſay,
My wiſhes are granted, my prayer is heard;
And all my affections I give to the Lord.

6. And though for the preſent I can't truly ſay,
That there are no evils now lurking in me;
Yet this is moſt certain, I feel it within,
The ferventeſt wiſh to be ſaved from all ſin.

Civicus. If this is as you have entitled it, a renewed ſoul's longing; then I am encouraged to ſay, I feel the ſame longings, as well as the ſame complaints. Therefore, though I feel reaſon to lament my ſmall attainments in ſanctification, yet I bleſs God, I ſee the work is begun. For, if ever words expreſſed the genuine ſentiments of any mind, the above Hymn does mine. Therefore, I ſorrow not as a man without hope, though I lament the ſmallneſs of my growth in ſanctification: yet I bleſs God for that ſmall degree I enjoy, and moſt earneſtly pray for an increaſe; and I am thankful for this beneficial and truly edifying converſation which we have now enjoyed. It has ſhewn me my malady, and pointed me to the all-ſufficient remedy; and I now ſee more than ever I ſaw before, both of the former and the latter, and it has made me loathe myſelf and long for a cure. May I not hope this is a token for good.

Evan. Certainly;—but the Lord is now ſhewing you that you muſt fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.* The life of faith is a combat, but if there were no enemies to fight with and ſtrive againſt, ſurely there would be neither propriety nor common ſenſe in ſaying it is a fight. But you muſt know that the chriſtian has to fight againſt fleſh and blood: i. e. corrupt nature and evil inclinations, as well as ſpiritual wickedneſſes in high places, or heavenly privileges, and againſt the temptations of the Devil. You muſt not be ſurprized if he ſhould be permitted to tempt you to commit the vileſt and blackeſt of crimes. But remember, to be tempted is not a ſin, for Chriſt himſelf was moſt dreadfully tempted, yet without ſin.† So you ſee, you have a wicked heart and a tempting Devil to fight againſt; and though you are too weak to do any thing yourſelf, yet you are to be ſtrong in the Lord and in the power of

* I. Tim. vi. 12.——II. Tim. iv. 7.

† To be tempted to ſin is one thing, and to yield to the temptation is another.—Temptation is not a ſin, but the commiſſion of the crime renders us guilty.

of his might. In divine ſtrength you will be more than a conqueror. Therefore, fear not, but let your hands be ſtrong, for you ſtand in the ſtrength of the Almighty. Adieu.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, adieu.

DIALOGUE X.

On the SAINTS PERSEVERANCE.

CIVICUS. I ſuppoſe I ſhall now have the pleaſure to hear your lecture on the perſeverance of all believers in Jeſus.

Evan. Yes:—and take notice, 1ſt.—That the righteous (ſo conſtituted by Jeſus Chriſt) ſhall hold on his way; and he to whom divine grace has imparted clean hands and a pure heart, ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger. What I mean by this is, that the juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified, being members of Chriſt's myſtical body; their election union* to him in eternity, is carried into a vital union to him in time, by the effectual working of the Holy Spirit. This is done by imparting faith in the Saviour, and genuine love to him; and by theſe two living and immortal principles, are the Redeemer's diſciples vitally, and indiſſolubly united to him. This bleſſed union our Lord himſelf teaches us in that beautiful allegory, where he ſpeaks of himſelf as the Rock,† and his Church as a Houſe built on it, againſt which neither the winds of falſe doctrine, nor ſtorms of perſecution, nor floods of temptation, either from without or within, ſhall ever prevail; nor the gates of hell itſelf. This union, I ſay, is here moſt beautifully ſet forth; and we ſee that ſuch is the firm cement of its conſtituent

* Eph. i. 4.—v. 30.—John xv. 5. † Matt. vii. 24, 25.

tuent parts, that it is pronounced by him who knoweth all things, and who cannot lie, that to ſever it is impoſſible. Therefore, we ſing with confidence,

"The work which wiſdom undertakes,
Eternal mercy ne'er forſakes."

The ſoul on whom the Divine Spirit begins to work he will never leave, till that work is perfected, till the ſoul is taken to heaven: and more, not till the body is at laſt raiſed from the dead, and faſhioned like the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. This is the work which the Divine Spirit begins, carries on, and completes in every redeemed ſinner's mind. This is exactly conſiſtent with what our Lord ſays, *I give eternal life to my Sheep, and they ſhall* NEVER *periſh, nor ſhall any pluck them out of my hands.** Therefore it is, that the Comforter is ſent with all ſeaſonable and ſuitable aid, that a ſingle Lamb of Chriſt's flock may not fail of being conducted ſafely to the heavenly paſtures, nor ſtop ſhort of being placed at the Saviour's right hand on his throne in glory. Is this the purpoſe of the great Shepherd? it is; then none can pluck a ſingle Lamb from his arms, or tear even a ſtraying Sheep from his embraces. For this is the will of the Father, that all thoſe who are given to the Son† ſhall be brought to partake of the benefits of redemption here, and to final glorification. For indeed, it is the deſign and intent of their redemption ‡ But in the next place,

2. For this end are they purchaſed by atoning blood, called by efficacious grace, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified, that they may be finally glorified. For this end, they are ſealed by the Spirit to the day of redemption, or reſurrection of the dead; and this end ſhall be infallibly obtained, for they are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation § Therefore, the challenge of the Apoſtle Paul is proper here: *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* ||

* John x. 27, 28. † John vi. 37.
‡ Iſaiah xxxv. 10.—Pſalm lxxxix. 28 to 37.—Rom. i. 38 39.
§ I. Peter i. 4, 5. || Rom. viii. 33, 34,

elect? It is God that juſtifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt that died, yea, rather that is riſen from the dead, and aſcended to the right-hand of God; who alſo interceeds for us. Surely then he ſhall neither bleed nor interceed in vain; nor can any be criminated whom God juſtifies, or any condemned whom he pardons: otherwiſe, this would be an empty boaſt and a futile challenge: but not ſo, for, Who can ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? Shall tribulation, or diſtreſs, or perſecution, or famine, or nakedneſs, or peril, or ſword? Nay, in all theſe things we are *more* than *conquerers*, through him that loved us.* As if he had ſaid, ſhall it ever be in the power of bodily pains or mental trials, how ſore and grievous ſoever they may be (and theſe have a ſtrong effect indeed on our frail and fleſhly part, but theſe ſhall not ſever us, it is not in their power) or diſtreſs, poverty, and the want of every earthly comfort: no, for in the midſt of theſe we have meat to eat, which the world knows not of, and which nouriſhes our ſpirits and ſupports our minds to bear all the divine good pleaſure, whatever it may be. This, therefore, ſhall not effect a diſ-union betwixt us and the beloved of our ſouls; for we are not left to the ſtrong workings of fleſh and blood in ſo trying a moment. If we ſhould be tempted to better our worldly condition by ſinning, in ſuch a trying ſeaſon, this ſhall not effect it; for though the world and our grand adverſary preſent to us the trifles of time and ſenſe, Jeſus Chriſt preſents to us his love, peace, pardon, and crowns of glory with eternal life. Therefore, diſtreſſing poverty and worldly temptation ſhall not ſeparate us.

Shall perſecution be able to effect this diſ-union? That no doubt is a formidable adverſary to fleſh and blood, and mere worldly profeſſors, who have nothing more about them than that which fleſh and ſenſual wiſdom can acquire; to ſuch this adverſary will be more than terrible, it will be victorious. But the Spirit of Chriſt teaches his followers, that though their

* Rom. viii. 35, 37.

their adverſaries may be ſtrong and mighty, yet he is infinitely ſtronger than all who oppoſe them, and his ſtrength is their ſupport. Conſequently, they have learnt of him, not to fear them who can kill the body *only*, but him who can deſtroy both *body and ſoul in hell.* They find that his love is ſtronger than this Lion, for the love of Chriſt is not only ſtronger than death itſelf, but it makes them victorious too; therefore, this adverſary ſhall not ſeparate us.

Shall Famine? Why, to be ſtarving for want of food, while perhaps the enemies of God and his people are rioting in luxury, having more than heart can wiſh, as has often been the caſe, is vaſtly trying and diſ-ſpiriting; but this ſhall not diſ-unite us, for we know well, that God's *Elijah's* ſhall be fed by ravens ſooner than they ſhall ſtarve for want, and if the *Jeroboam's* of the world make idolatrous altars and ſacrifice there, from thence the ravens ſhall fetch the fleſh they offer to nouriſh his wanting children; and their poor bodies ſhall infallibly be ſupported till God's deſigns are done *in them* and *by them.* Or, ſhould their bodies be dying for want of food, their ſouls ſhall be fed with royal dainties, and nouriſhed to everlaſting life; conſequently, the weakeſt of them all are ſtronger than *this* or any adverſary.

Or Nakedneſs? No! for the ſaints are clothed with the robes of immortality; and therefore, their ſouls can never ſuffer nakedneſs: and as for their bodies, he who clothes the graſs with gaiety, will take care that his children ſhall not want ſuitable clothing, they believe and know this. Therefore, this ſhall not overcome them, nor make them deſert their maſter's cauſe; for they are conſcious too, that if undreſſed of mortality they ſhall be clothed with immortality,* and enter into eternal reſt. This fortifies their minds againſt this foe.

Or Peril of any ſort or kind whatever? It is abſolutely impoſſible their condition ſhould be ſo perilous

* II. Cor. v. 1.

perilous as to put them out of the divine protection. or, if plague, or peſtilence, or ſword, ſhould be permitted to touch their bodily lives, yet their ſouls are ſtill in their Redeemer's hands, and he preſerves them for ever. Then, in this caſe, their very pains and death, ſhall only procure for them more reſplendent crowns of glory, and cauſe them to paſs more ſpeedily into the reſt which remains for them in their Father's Kingdom. Therefore, no temporal calamity ſhall ever effect a diſ-union betwixt Chriſt and the members of his myſtical body; and if they are at any time felt, and with ſeverity too, it ſhall only cauſe them to cleave cloſer to him, and make them to know more than ever how wonderfully he can ſave them in times of imminent peril. Calamities then, ſhall only make them wiſer, and ſend them with the greater ſpeed to the chambers of divine protection, where their Redeemer ſhews them ſecretly the power of his arm, and the affection of his heart engaged to ſend them timely aid and effectual ſupport and conſolation.

Or Sword? No! this is a carnal weapon, which the wicked uſe for carnal purpoſes; and to nominal profeſſors this may have a moſt terrific aſpect, and fright them away from their religion; but all the ſaints are clothed with better armour, namely, *The Sword of the Spirit*;* wielded by the power of God, on which the carnal ſword can have no power. Therefore, the children of God fear not them who can kill the body,† for they know that a hair of their heads cannot fall without their Heavenly Father's permiſſion;‡ and that they are themſelves immortal§ till the time fixed by infinite wiſdom is arrived for their removal to glory. Or ſhould any one of them fall by the hands of an aſſaſſin, it ſhall only ſend them the quicker to heaven: *i. e.* quicker to human appearance, compared with thoſe who linger long in a ſtate of weakneſs and bodily diſeaſe. No wonder then, that the

* Eph. vi. 17. † Matt. x. 28. ‡ Job. vii. 1.—xiv. 14. Eccle. iii. 2. § Luke xii. 4, 5.

the Apoſtle ſhould tell us, that in all theſe things the ſaints are more than conquerors, through him who loved them.* The reaſon is this, every individual of them is clothed with *The whole Armour of God*,† and divine power makes them more than conquerors, and by it they are kept through faith unto ſalvation. This is the ſecurity of the ſaints; therefore he may very properly carry on his challenge, and every ſaint has a right to follow him in the ſame confidence: that neither the height of earthly proſperity how faſcinating ſoever it may be; nor the depth of worldly adverſity, however low it may ſink the believer in temporal diſtreſs; nor death, however formidable it may be in its attacks, or however tormenting to be ſuffered; nor life, however ſweet and alluring it may be to fleſh and blood, and on many accounts deſirable to the believer himſelf: nor angels, *i. e.* dæmons, however ſubtile and ſtrong they may be, or however deep their ſchemes may be laid, or however great their malice: nor principalities or powers, whether terreſtrial or infernal, either leagued together or apart, or with all their terrors in advance, their devices ſhall all fail, and their plots come to nothing. For, neither things preſent, whether good or bad: nor things to come, of whatever nature and tendency, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the Love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.

Here, my *Civicus*, you plainly perceive, every conceivable evil and adverſary, that can be ſuppoſed to conſpire againſt the Church of God, or any individual ſaint, is adverted to by the Apoſtle; and after a minute ſurvey of them all, he pronounces in the moſt peremptory and deciſive manner, that their conſpiracies ſhall not fruſtrate the ſalvation of any believer, or ſeparate them from the Love of God.

Now tell me honeſtly and plainly, what doctrine it is which the Apoſtle here teaches. Or, which is much the ſame, ſay, what inferences naturally ſpring from the premiſes.

* Rom. viii. 37. † Eph. vi. 13 to 18.

Civicus. I freely and readily own, that it appears evidently from what you have advanced, that the doctrine which naturally and neceſſarily ſuggeſts itſelf from theſe premiſes is, that the Love of God to his people is eternal and unchangeable; and therefore the perſeverance of the ſaints is founded thereon; and of conſequence, is as firm and as certain as the being of a God. This is the doctrine evidently ſuggeſted; and I infer too, that you wiſh me ſo to conceive of it.

Evan. Certainly, that is what I mean to intimate to you, your inference is therefore well conceived: and I ſhall add, beſides being intereſted in eternal love, the ſaints are redeemed by blood divine,* and their ſins are all atoned for by the death of Chriſt, and law and juſtice ſatisfied on their account. Conſequently, there never can be any condemnation to any believer in Jeſus, for their ſins being done away by atoning blood, their guilt can no more be found, or charged againſt them. The great ſcape goat† has borne them away as far as the eaſt is from the weſt:‡ *i. e.* to an inconceivable diſtance, from whence it cannot return. Beſides, the communications of the divine Spirit's graces and influences, timely and ſeaſonably adminiſtered, ſecures them againſt apoſtacy and complete conqueſt by the temptations of the Devil, and the luſts of the fleſh, and the vanity of the world. Therefore, neither licentiouſneſs on the one hand, nor phariſaic pride on the other, ſhall ever be able to effect the final ruin of any believer in Jeſus. They are all vitally united to him by faith and love, and this union is indiſſoluble. Therefore, the perſeverance of the ſaints in grace to glory, is a divine doctrine; and to call it in queſtion, is not only to reſiſt the cleareſt light, but alſo to make God as changeable and fickle as man. For the doctrine you perceive, ſtands on theſe firm grounds:

1ſt. The

* Acts. xx. 28——Eph. i. 7. 14. † Lev. xvi. 21.

‡ Pſa. ciii. 12——Iſa. liii. 4.

1ſt. The unchangeability of the divine purpoſe of Salvation.

2d. On the promiſe, truth and faithfulneſs of Jehovah.

3d. On the redemption and atonement of the great Redeemer.

4th. On the work of the Holy Spirit.

All which are perfect in kind, unchangeable in their nature, and eternal in their duration; and the ſalvation thus ſecured is infallible.

Civicus. Be it ſo, yea and I rejoice that it is. But what have you to ſay further to thoſe who aſſert, that a man may be a child of God to-day and a child of the Devil to-morrow? Or, which is juſt the ſame thing, that a man may be called, juſtified, adopted, and ſanctified, pardoned and accepted, and yet fall from grace and be damned?

Evan. *Say,* I have every thing to ſay that is neceſſary to be ſaid to convince any man who is willing to be convinced, that ſuch doctrine is *totally falſe.* For,

1. It contradicts the expreſs and unequivocal words of our Lord himſelf; for he ſays, *I give unto my ſheep eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hands.* Now if any of the called according to the divine purpoſe, be plucked out of Chriſt's hands, then theſe words are not true; and let us remember that our Lord aſſerts this over and over,* and ſo do both the Prophets and Apoſtles: but if that doctrine which I am militating againſt be true, then they have all taught falſehoods; but this you will not conſent too for a moment. Nor is this all, for,

2. If any ſaint fall from grace and periſh, then it is not eternal life which Chriſt gives, but a very ſhort and temporary one indeed! which they would have been much better off to have remained without.† But it is eternal life which Chriſt gives, and not a temporary one. Therefore, the doctrine of falling from grace, is falſe. But,

* John iii. 36.—vi. 40. & x. 28. † II. Peter ii. 21.

3. The doctrine of falling from grace makes the purpoſe of ſalvation a changeable and variable thing; and conſequently, the ſalvation of any one is a mere fortuitous event, and altogether uncertain, both to ſaints and ſinners. For if God is not in *one mind* about the ſalvation of believers, he may will their ſalvation to-day and alter his mind to-morrow: and if ſo, then he is a changeable being, and the ſalvation of any is at beſt but a very doubtful and uncertain matter. Beſides,

4. If the doctrine of falling from grace were true, then Chriſt died at *hap-hazard*: for it is not certain that he ſhall ſee of the travail of his ſoul and be ſatisfied; ſo far from it, there is not ſo much as a may-be for it; or if ſo, but at beſt a mere *may-be*, that ſome of the fallen race of Adam may be ſaved through the merits of Chriſt's death and ſufferings and their own meritorious *free will*. For if the ſalvation of all be not wholly of grace,* then it muſt be partly of the will of man; and then, ſalvation is of him that willeth and of him who runneth, and not wholly of him who ſheweth mercy; but partly of him who ſheweth mercy, and partly of him who has ſome merit. But this contradicts the whole goſpel.

5. Therefore if ſalvation is at all in any ſenſe whatever of human merit, then, that ſalvation is not of grace but of debt. But this gives the lie both to the old teſtament and the new. The doctrine of falling from grace then, is a *palpable falſehood*, abſolutely unworthy the chriſtian aſſent and the chriſtian character, and as ſuch, let us reject it: and if I know my own feelings, from the bottom of my ſoul (if I may ſo ſpeak) I do ſo reject it. Same time I have nothing to do with the ſtate of the ſouls of many who believe that doctrine, except in the exerciſe of chriſtian charity to hope that they may be right in the main notwithſtanding. It is the odious doctrine I contend againſt, and not the ſtate of their ſouls before God. But,

6. If

* Rom. xi. 6, 7.

6. If any one of the purchaſed by redeeming blood, and called by divine grace, may nevertheleſs fall away and periſh, then it follows, they all may do ſo, and of conſequence, the atonement of Chriſt be of no value whatever, but his death be altogether in vain. But who that is willing to liſten to common ſenſe, can ſuppoſe for a moment that Chriſt would undertake to ſuffer and die to *no purpoſe*, or an *uncertain* and *doubtful one at beſt*. No, a God of *infinite wiſdom* cannot act ſo *unwiſely*. But,

7. If any one of the called by grace can fall away and periſh after being thus called, then, Chriſt has not redeemed them from the curſe of the law, for they fall under it and periſh by it. But redemption and condemnation are two extremes in oppoſition, and where the former reigns, the latter muſt be annihilated. It is evident then, that the doctrine of falling from grace, makes redemption a *non-entity*; and contradicts the plaineſt declarations in the Bible. St. Paul ſays, Chriſt *hath* redeemed us *from* the curſe of the law.* Conſequently the law can curſe *no* believer *any more*; nor any renewed ſoul become a *caſt-away*. But in the next place,

8. If any believer fall from grace and periſh, then a great part of the ſcriptures mean nothing, or worſe than that, they tell us what is not a fact; for they ſay as plain as any words can make a thing, that the covenant of grace is an *everlaſting covenant*,† as firm as the days of heaven: and that thoſe who are intereſted therein, ſhall not be dit-inherited.—*Yea, even though they break God's ſtatutes and keep not his commandments*; i. e. not ſo perfectly and perſeveringly as they ought. *Yet, nevertheleſs, the Lord will not take his loving kindneſs from them; nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail*:—that *Iſrael ſhall be ſaved in the Lord with an everlaſting ſalvation*:—our Lord ſays, *All that the Father giveth me ſhall come to me*:—and Job ſays, *The righteous ſhall hold on his way*,‡ *and he who has clean hands*

* Gal. iii. 13. † Pſa. lxxxix 28, 34, 35, 36.
‡ Job xvii. 9.——Iſa. xxxv. 10.

hands ſhall wax ſtronger and ſtronger:—and Iſaiah ſays, *The redeemed of the Lord ſhall return and come to Zion with ſongs and everlaſting joy.* All of which muſt be abſolutely *falſe* if falling from grace be true. But let God be true and every man (who contradicts him) a liar; and let us receive the truths which the Bible teaches, and reject the errors of miſtaken men, for in doing this we ſhall be ſafe.

Civicus. I ſincerely believe it. And now permit me to make an inference or two. It appears to me, that it is fair to infer from your premiſes and from the nature of the thing, that the advocates of the ſalvable ſtate ſyſtem, live much nearer to *Socinian-row* than to the *Streets of Zion.* For, if it reſts with natural men to accept or reject the ſalvation which Chriſt has effected for his people; and if the called, juſtified, &c. may, nevertheleſs fall away and be damned; the difference betwixt the doctrine of theſe men and that of *Socinus* is not ſo very great as ſome people would have it to be. For that deceived mortal, if I am rightly informed, will have it, that men are ſomehow or other the better for Chriſt, if they will be obliging enough to hearken to him. Now it ſeems to me that this ſalvable-ſtate ſyſtem is very little preferable to his.

Evan. Evidently ſo, my friend. Therefore to join with either of theſe, is ſo far, to deny a capital truth of the Goſpel of Chriſt. For, to contradict any part of the Bible, or any doctrine taught therein; is in the ſame proportion to turn infidel, and ſo far to deny the faith. For theſe reaſons, I ſuppoſe you are as ready as myſelf to reject theſe falſe ſyſtems, and to embrace the free grace ſcheme.

Civicus. Certainly I am. For, though I don't know that I could have aſſigned thoſe reaſons ſo readily as you have now done, yet I ſee things in the very ſame light, and feel my heart embrace with greater eagerneſs than ever, the whole of this golden chain of divine verity; and I think I would not loſe one link of it for a thouſand worlds. I ſee with

with ſatisfaction, that this is that ſyſtem of holy truth which ſupports and comforts the ſaints of God under all their trials and even in death itſelf. I am perſuaded too, thoſe were the truths on which the bleſſed martyrs lived, and their firm and unſhaken belief of them made them triumphant in death, and enabled them to be more than conquerors over all its terrors; and armed with this rich belief, every believer may gain the ſame conqueſt, and win the ſame crown, if called thereto. Yea, even I, weak and inſignificant as I am, if called to the ſame trials, I truſt I ſhould have the ſame ſtrength imparted to me, and in that ſtrength gain the ſame happy victory.

Evan. Yes, my Civicus, for Chriſt tells you, as he told Paul of old, *My grace is ſufficient for thee*:* *my ſtrength is made perfect in thy weakneſs*; and in this thou art made ſtrong. As you ſay, in this rich belief the ſoul of the believer becomes mighty through God, and pulls down the ſtrong holds of ſinful terror, and becomes *courageous* and *victorious*. What a mercy that you are made to know this!

Civicus. A mercy indeed! my Evangeliſta, and all of mercy! never was one more unworthy or undeſerving, but I have obtained this mercy! Glory to my merciful God and Father! I know this is not a licentious doctrine, nor any encouragement to ſpiritual ſloth. But ſay, does it not look with a favourable eye to poor backſliders?

Evan. To returning backſliders it certainly does. As for thoſe who are like the ſtoney and thorny ground hearers,† who profeſs only, and but for a time, and then finally and fully turn back into the world, theſe were never ſavingly converted to God, or really born again, they were only temporary lookers on, who for a ſeaſon were tickled and amuſed, and for that reaſon ſeemed to become religious perſons; but bye and bye, ſomething or other, to them more deſirable, turns their attention another way, and after it they go. But theſe

* II. Cor. xii. 9. † Matt. xiii. 5, 6, 7.

theſe never took one ſingle ſtep in the way to heaven, and therefore, ſuch cannot be ſaid to be backſliders, but abſolute hyprocrites, and perſons dead in treſpaſſes and ſins. But a backſlider in a ſpiritual ſenſe, is one who after having been ſoundly converted to Chriſt, and ſavingly renewed by the Holy Ghoſt, has unhappily given way to ſome temptation or other, which has been too ſtrong for him, and actually fallen into ſome known ſin;* this brings guilt on the conſcience, fear into the ſoul, and ſhame covers the face of this poor creature. He is now unable to keep up as before, that conſtant and perſevering attendance on the means of grace he was wont to do. The conſequence is, for a while he declines both in heart and life, and perhaps falls into ſome grievous ſin. Then the tempter tells him 'tis all over now, he is gone beyond the reach of mercy, and therefore he may as well go on and take all the pleaſure he can in the ways of ſin, for he ſhall never have any other, nor obtain pardon for his grievous offences againſt light and knowledge; he has trampled the blood of Chriſt under his polluted feet, and put him to an open ſhame, and now he muſt never expect to be reſtored to repentance, but fall under the ſoreſt vengeance of the Almighty. This drives him ſtill further from God, but he can find no reſt to his ſoul, but is like *Noah's* Dove out of the Ark, which found no reſt till ſhe returned thither; or, like a fiſh thrown on the land, quite out of his element in a tormenting ſituation, having no reſt nor any hope, and knows not what to do. This is, in my opinion, properly ſpeaking a *Backſlider*: and of ſuch an one, I will boldly ſay, *There is hope in Iſreal reſpecting him, notwithſtanding this thing.*

But there is very often a backſliding in heart when the life is tolerably decent; a cooling of affection and zeal, a backwardneſs and inaptitude to ſpiritual exerciſes, and particularly to private prayer, and a cheriſhing of ſecret ſin, and a too great conformity to a faſhionable profeſſion, and the conduct of mere worldly

* Matt. xxv. 2, 5.—xxvi. 70, 74.

worldly profeſſors. This is equally odious and deteſtable in the eye of divine purity, with that of more open and flagitious backſliding; and the backſlider in heart ſhall be filled with his own ways,* and if grace prevent not, be found awfully faulty. But if the former or the latter, is ſenſible of the evil of his ways, and deplores his ſad ſituation, he need not deſpair, for the arms of divine mercy are ever ready to embrace him.

For the feeling of extreme pain and uneaſineſs is a proof that a man is not dead; and a healthy, ſound, and ſtrong man may fall and break his bones and bruiſe himſelf beſides, but ſo long as he feels his ſituation and deplores his caſe, it is evident that natural life is not extinct, though the man is in extreme pain and danger, yet while life remains there is hope. Juſt ſuch is the caſe of the repenting backſlider: he has fallen and awfully bruiſed himſelf, his confidence in the Lord is broken, the hope of his ſoul is ſo weak that it is almoſt extinct, and he is filled with the bittereſt anguiſh. But feeling proves him to be alive, though all his ſpiritual powers are extremely maimed and debilitated. But let ſuch a ſoul take courage, for the great and good Phyſician can and will cure him, for he has a healing medicine for every malady, and a ſalve for every ſore. His tender and gracious heart pities the poor wretch's condition, and will heal all his wounds. Hear his language, ye backſliding ſouls, what does he ſay? *Return ye backſliding children unto me, for I am married unto you, ſaith the Lord:† I will heal your backſlidings and love you freely, for I hate putting away.* This proves that he will not forget his covenant nor ſuffer his faithfulneſs to fail, nor blot the name of ſuch a poor wanderer from the book of life.

Let every mourning backſlider obſerve this, and take encouragement to return to the Lord, and let them know they ſhall find a hearty welcome, for Jeſus will

* Pro. xiv. 14. † Jer. iii. 14.

will not frown them away, nor take his mercy from them. *The Spirit and the bride ſay,* even to ſuch, *let them come and take of the waters of life freely.** And our Lord himſelf ſays, *All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men.*† To repenting and returning prodigals, and conſequently this among the reſt; yea, this as freely and fully as any other.

Sorrowful ſin ſtung backſlider, whoever thou art, or whatever thine offences have been, be encouraged to take with thee words of ſupplication for mercy, and turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on thee,‡ give thee a freſh token of his love, and heal the wounds thy ſins have made in thy ſoul.—But, ſays ſuch a poor trembler, mine are the worſt and the blackeſt of crimes that can be committed, no equal to my guilt can be found this ſide the infernal regions. Can the Lord ſhew mercy to me? Yes, poor ſoul, to thee! True, thy guilt is black indeed, but the blood of Jeſus cleanſes from the fouleſt ſtains, and it riſes over all the mountains of thy unworthineſs, and drowns all thy guilt; for ſinners of the deepeſt dye, as well as thoſe of feebler practical teints, have been received to mercy, and millions of them have been pardoned, reſtored, and made happy. Make the trial, poor ſoul, and thou ſhalt ſhare the ſame felicity. Notice well what I ſay, it is not the vileneſs and blackneſs of any ſinner's crimes that ſhall hinder his ſalvation, how odious ſoever they may have been, but a continuance in *obſtinacy* and *unbelief*; this *only* ſhuts any ſinner out from ſalvation. Let this be well obſerved, and it cannot fail to afford encouragement to doubting and diſtreſſed ſinners, in ſuch a caſe as is here ſuppoſed.

Civicus. I have no doubt but this is reviving and comforting news to many; and on your own principles, it becomes you to ſay ſomething to backſliders in public, and often too; for I aſſure you, if other hearts are like mine, there are many backſliders in heart, though they may not have ſtained their profeſſion

* Rev. xxii. 17. † Mark iii, 28. ‡ Hoſea xiv. 2, 4.

feſſion outwardly in life: but I think theſe ſhould neither be forgotten nor thrown away. And I think too, that this backſliding diſpoſition muſt be overcome by faith, for I don't believe it can by doubting and unbelief. Therefore a word of caution and encouragement on this head ſhould be often given, for none can tell how much evil it may prevent, both in the mind and the life of many a ſaint.

Evan. Your remark is good and juſt, my Civicus, and I hope to profit by it as much as you may deſire; and indeed I think I can ſay, I have not been altogether unmindful of ſuch caſes. However, it is not too late to improve. And now before we part let me deſire you to be watchful, prayerful, and perſevering againſt any diſpoſition you may at any time feel to indulge any conſtitutional ſin, however ſecret it may be; and be continually looking to the ſtrong for ſtrength againſt every tendency to a backſliding diſpoſition, either in heart or life. For you know, both the former and the latter is the way to have broken bones, and ſurely no wiſe man will break his bones becauſe there is a probability of having them ſet again. Beſides, the beſt evidence we can have of the truth of perſeverance, is to be found perſevering. The beſt proof of our being called of God, is to be found in the diſcharge of every duty which Chriſt has enjoined us; to be ready and prompt to every good word and work. For ſays our Lord, *He that endureth to the end ſhall be ſaved. If ye do whatſoever I command you, then are ye my diſciples indeed.*

May the Lord enable us to mend our pace, and preſs towards the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and to know that he will ſave us from ſin to the end of our journey. Or, if unhappily we ſhould be overtaken by temptation; may we betake ourſelves to deep humiliation and fervent prayer, but not to deſpair: it is good to exerciſe a holy jealouſy, but not to yield to ſlaviſh fear. Let us learn to run the chriſtian race looking to Jeſus; ſo ſhall we be ſtrong in his ſtrength, and mighty in the power of

his might; and not be overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good; and to wax valient in fight, turning to flight the armies of the aliens.*

Civicus. I ſee the propriety of your remarks, and feel the force of them on my mind; and am convinced that it is an important truth, that the beſt proof of perſeverance is to be found perſevering in the ways of God, and daily growing in every grace. However, 'tis very good to know where one's ſtrength lies, and to be enabled to diſcern on what ground we ſtand.

Have you any other word of advice to offer on this head?

Evan. A word or two, and I have done for the preſent; and it is a word of advice to you:—You are, you know, but a young diſciple, lately ſet out in the way to glory, and you have a falſe and treacherous heart, and have much need to be on your guard, particularly againſt a worldly ſpirit, worldly maxims, and latent luſts. Evils without and worſt within, but both very dangerous foes; and ſhould you give way to them, your profeſſion may become modiſh and eaſy; but remember when it becomes a profeſſion *a la mode*†, it is a proof that ſuch live far from God. But that is ſad living indeed. And aſſure yourſelf, you will meet with the attacks of all theſe, but if you are enabled to watch and pray, you will be kept from being overcome by temptation. But if you at any time parly with ſin, and yield a little to temptation, the devil will renew the onſet with redoubled vigour, and a million to one but he trips you up, and gives you a dreadful fall. Therefore, remember our Lord's caution: *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all* WATCH.‡

Civicus. I ſee the importance and feel the kindneſs of this advice. May the Lord b graciouſly pleaſed to make and keep me watchful, prayerful, and circumſpect.

Have you any other obſervation of this ſort to make?

Evan.

* Heb. xi. 34. † A faſhionable profeſſion.
‡ Mark xiii. 37.

Evan. Not at preſent; but if you have any other queſtion to propoſe, do it now.

Civicus. What can we ſay of thoſe perſons who profeſs for a while, perhaps for many years, and *ſeem* to be chief in the Church of God, both for *piety, gifts,* and *zeal,* and of whom on that account every body thought well; but bye and bye they are offended at ſomething or other, and away they go, and we hear no more of them: and of others, who go on in a profeſſion till detected by their crimes, while they carry on their profeſſion.

Evan. What can we ſay of them? Why what the apoſtle John has ſaid already: they went out from us, becauſe they were not of us;* had they been of us, *no doubt* they would have continued with us; but they went out from us for this purpoſe, that they may be manifeſted that they were not of us. As our Lord ſays to the phariſees; *Ye believe not becauſe ye are not of my ſheep.*† In the former inſtance, it is clear that thoſe who go out from us and never return, have done as *Judas* did, *joined themſelves* to the Church of God, and had only ſo much religion as mere nature could acquire, and no more; and therefore, they are carried away by their own corrupt bias and ſatan's temptations; for nature cannot effect a ſaving change, and nothing but divine power and grace can preſerve from apoſtacy. As for thoſe who profeſs till their crimes are detected, they are abſolute hypocrites; and if they never repent they will ſink lower in hell than the ſinner's of Sodom,‡ of Tyre, and Sidon, and the darkeſt of the heathen. But neither the former nor the latter could fall from grace which they never had, nor go out of that way they never were in. A man may profeſs to have grace, and to believe the doctrines of grace, when he has not been renewed in the ſpirit of his mind by the divine Spirit; and from this profeſſion he may fall, and he certainly will do ſo ſooner or later, except it pleaſe the Lord to renew his ſoul by heavenly grace.

* I. John ii. 19. † John x. 26. ‡ Matt. xi. 2 to 24.

grace. But the acquirements of nature, and renovation by grace, are two very diſtinct things: and the child of nature cannot be in a ſtate of grace; and conſequently, could not loſe what he did not poſſeſs.

A man may have a traditional religion, and a natural perception of the doctrines of religion; and may have, moreover, an attachment to the mode of his ſect, and the doctrines they eſpouſe; without his heart being renewed. But his falling from this is not a falling from the poſſeſſion of real grace, but from a ſemblance of it. The words of the apoſtle to the Galatians,* Hebrews,† and other places, which ſpeak of falling away, are to be underſtood in this light, when they are ſo underſtood, we conceive rightly of this important matter.

Civicus. You appear to have reaſon and truth on your ſide, and therefore I chearfully acquieſce in it. I perceive now, that nature may be poliſhed without being ſanctified,‡ and then no wonder that ſuch profeſſors turn away ſooner or later. It is the child of God only to whom eternal life is given, and it is grace only which completes what it begins, and ſo brings the partakers of it through all to glory at laſt. May this felicity be mine, and my friend's alſo, for Chriſt's ſake. *Amen.*

Evan. Amen! May we ſhare in this mercy largely now, and at laſt ſhine in glory with all the blood bought throng, for Jeſus' ſake.

But before we part I wiſh to obſerve, that the native influence and tendency of theſe ſacred principles on the hearts and lives of all thoſe who underſtand them, and cordially receive them is,

1. That they are productive of ſincere and ſupreme love to God:§ for in theſe holy truths the divine character is held forth to us as ſupremely and infinitely lovely. His nature is infinitely pure and ſpotleſs; and his conduct infinitely wiſe, holy, juſt, and good. Yea, God is Love, and in his love and his mercy he has

* Gal. v. 4. † Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6. ‡ II. Peter ii. 20, to 22.
§ John xxi. 17.

has choſen to ſave us; and his love* attracts the believing ſoul to love him in return. Divine love begets and increaſes the believer's love. Yea, the diſcovery of divine love to the believing ſoul, is the moving cauſe† of the believer's love. For, the diſcovery which the Lord makes to him is, that he hath loved him with a free and eternal love, merely becauſe it was his own good pleaſure ſo to do, and for no other cauſe or reaſon: this ſecures and preſerves the believer's love to his loving and gracious God. This love makes his chearful feet run delightfully in the way of the divine precepts. Now the divine commands are not grievous but delightful, and the ſoul pants after greater alacrity and enlargement in the ways of God, and cannot reſt in any preſent attainments, nor till he is made perfect in holineſs, and ſet down at the right-hand of God in heaven. The whole ſoul of the believer is divinely attracted by this love, to love God ſupremely and ſincerely, and to aim conſtantly and continually at a growing conformity to the divine image in knowledge, faith, love, and true holineſs, and ſhort of it the believer will not reſt. But in the next place,

2. Another bleſſed effect of theſe divine truths on the ſoul of the believer, is ſincere good will to all his fellow men,‡ without exception, and eſpecially to his fellow diſciples. Theſe divine principles inſpire the believing mind with the generous belief, that all men are the creatures of the ſame God,§ made by the ſame divine power, and deſcended from the ſame original human parent, and are naturally brethren of the ſame family, and equally entitled to his regard and eſteem, as men: but it is lawful and right that he ſhould have a ſpecial regard‖ for all his fellow diſciples in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt: and this peculiar regard for his chriſtian brethren every believer has and cheriſhes; and by theſe principles his life and actions

* I. John iv. 19. † Gal. v. 5, 22—Eph. i. 10—Pſ. cvi. 1.
‡ I. John iv. 7, 8.——Luke ii. 14. & vi. 31 to 38.
§ Acts xvii. 26. ‖ Gal. vi. 10.

actions are guided. For there is this one grand rule which our Lord has taught us, by which all his disciples are influenced; viz, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets.** Therefore, every true believer is conscientiously, and studiously concerned to act by this rule; for Jesus says, if ye love me keep my commandments;† and the love of Christ constrains him to be observant of all that Jesus has commanded. Consequently, he is a man of sound piety towards God, and genuine good will to all men in general, and especially christian men. The happiness of his fellow men adds pleasure to his own; and the joy of his brethren in Christ adds bliss to his joy, he rejoices with those who do rejoice, and mourns with those who weep. This is the fruit of redeeming love brought home to the soul, and it is this which makes him the most generous being on earth, as well as the most compassionate: and he is sweetly impelled to this by his own gracious feelings. For, as the elect of God,‡ holy and beloved, he has been enabled to have bowels of mercies, and these are tenderly touched with the most generous feelings; and this is ever his godlike sentiment, to do whatever he can to *lessen* the *miseries* of men, and to *increase* their comforts, not by *complying* with their *vices*, or *conniving* at them, but by generous and manly efforts to meliorate their mental and moral condition, as well as by alleviating their temporal distress. Thus men, as men, are the objects of his general regard and good will, but the saints are the objects of his peculiar love and esteem. But in the next place.

3. These are doctrines according to godliness, and not, as some in their blind zeal for supposed holiness have represented them, the doctrines of licentiousness. No! They lead to the most exalted piety and the purest benevolence. Therefore, if a real christian has property, he will employ it for God, to do good to

* Matt. vii. 12. & xxii. 39. † John xiv. 15. & xv. 14.
‡ Col. iii. 12.

to his fellow men; he will procure wholeſome inſtruction for thoſe who are ignorant, and relief for thoſe who are in diſtreſs. If he has talents of a ſpiritual kind, theſe he will employ as providence calls, for the ſame benevolent purpoſe, even to ſhew men the way to life and peace; and if he has it in his power to encourage others to the ſame benevolent undertaking, he will readily do it. The minds of men he eſteems of the greateſt importance by inconceivable degrees, and for their welfare he is principally concerned. Therefore, the propagation of the bleſſed goſpel as extenſively as poſſible, is the chief of his wiſhes on earth, and his chief ſtudies are directed to this grand object; for he knows well, that human felicity is conſequent on its ſpread,* and that for want of it the people periſh.† Therefore,

4. Not only the profane and ungodly are precluded a right to the Chriſtian name, but likewiſe all worldly profeſſors, and *idle droning* PARSONS, who are neither ſtudious nor active for the propagation of the goſpel, nor the good of mankind, but are mere religious *money getters*,‡ *ſelf ſeekers*, and *world pleaſers*; theſe are not influenced by divine truth, nor conformed to Chriſt Jeſus, but to themſelves and the world; and theſe belong not to the Church of God, and have no ſaving acquaintance with the Church's Head. Therefore, except they be born again§ of the Divine Spirit, they muſt remain among the congregation of the dead;‖ or, which is the ſame, among *infidels* and *heathens*, for they are not of the communion of the ſaints, and dying ſo, they muſt dwell with them for ever in hell. But,

5. Thoſe who profeſs to believe theſe divine principles, but are *lovers of ſin*, and live in the commiſſion of it, *are not Chriſtians* but *Hypocrites*,¶ and in that ſtate *cannot be ſaved*. But this is not meant to throw diſcouragement in the way of any repenting ſinner, or any

* Eze. xlvii. 9 ——Rev. xxii. 1, 2 —— Pſalm xlvi. 4.
† Prov. xxix. 18 —Amos viii. 11. ‡ Iſa. lvi. 10, 11.
Eze. xxxiv. 2, 3. § John iii. 5. ‖ Pro. xxi. 16.
¶ Matt. vii. 5.—Iſa. lviii. 2. compared with Chap. lix. 2, 3.

any ſorrowful backſlider, who is longing to return and to have his backſlidings healed; but to undeceive the lovers of iniquity who make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof, and yet tell us they believe in Chriſt for ſalvation. The *profeſſion of ſuch is a lie*, and if grace prevent not, DAMNATION *will be their end.** Yea, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgement than for ſuch. But,

6. Thoſe divine doctrines lead no ſoul to reſt in mere morality, or a form of godlineſs;† but they lead the believer away from ſin and out of ſelf, to truſt only in the Lord our Saviour for ſalvation. They empty the ſoul of ſelf and ſin, and fill it with the love of Jeſus. This love fills them with joy and peace in believing, it helps them to ſee their calling, and thereby to know their election, and to be perſuaded of their acceptance with God. This creates an anticipation of eternal glory, before we arrive at it, and gives us a foretaſte of the heavenly felicity, and brings a little of glory down to men. Therefore,

7. The man who has felt the power and taſted the ſweets of thoſe divine truths, is fit to live and prepared to die. He is fit to live, for he is a man of God and will act agreeable to his will, his fellow men are the better for him, and he is daily winning brightneſs to adorn his heavenly crown. His love of divine truth will lead him conſtantly and regularly to the Houſe of God, and to all the means of grace, and trifles will not be able to keep him away; and thus he has happineſs whilſt here, and that of the moſt refined nature. He is fit to die, for he is intereſted in all the benefits of the great redemption, and heaven is his home; and as ſoon as he ceaſes to breathe on earth,‡ he will be taken to the heavenly reſt. This is the happy reſult of a ſaving acquaintance with theſe divine principles. I mean, this is the reſult of them to all thoſe whoſe hearts are enlightened and purified by their

* Rom. iii. 8. † II. Tim. iii. 5. ‡ II. Cor. v. 1, 8.

their influence, and who by them are taught to love the Saviour, truſt in him, and live to his glory. Therefore we may ſay,

8. Real believers in the bleſſed goſpel, are in a meaſure reſtored to that godlikeneſs from which Adam fell.* I ſay, *in a meaſure*; though in many but a *ſmall meaſure*, yet there is a degree of it, and that degree is made to grow continually till it is perfected in the regions of bliſs. But the believer is much more ſecure than Adam was before he fell. Yea, the weakeſt believer is, for though he is not free from ſin, nor exempt from temptation, yet he is fixed by divine appointment on a more ſure foundation, yea 'tis on an immoveable Rock,† where he is ſafe to eternal ages. But in the

9th place. Though this is an abſolute fact, yet it by no means exempts the believer from watchfulneſs‡ and diligence, or allows any laxneſs to any duty which God has commanded, or which Chriſt has enjoined, but it leads powerfully to a conſtant obſervance of them all. Therefore, my *Civicus*, may you and I have grace to be found perſevering in the way of the divine commands. I hope you feel the moſt ardent deſires after this, and I fervently wiſh I felt more of it myſelf.

Civicus. I thought I had anticipated your doctrine on this point before; and I perceive I did, and I ſee the propriety of your obſervations. But ah! how ſhort do I fall! and I muſt adopt your language, I fervently wiſh I felt it more. I truſt I have felt and do now feel ſomething of it; but at times, the ſtrong workings of latent corruptions ſeem to me to be much ſtronger than any gracious feelings I have yet had. This is my lamentation, and I conceive it ought to be lamented; but I find the utmoſt of theſe effects on my mind, and to manifeſt them in the whole of my life.

* I. Cor. xv. 21. 22.—Rom. viii. 29.—II. Cor. iii. 18.
† Matt. vii. 25. ‡ Mark xiii. 35 to 37—Matt. xxiv. 42 and xxv. 13—I. Theſ. v. 6.—Mark xiii. 33.

Evan. True, my friend, this ought to be lamented, but let us remember we have an Advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous;* and we are told, you know, we are complete in him. I will acknowledge I have felt myſelf the ſtrong workings of latent corruptions to be more powerful than any gracious feeling I ever had, as I thought, and many and many a time too; but I don't think this is actually the caſe, for if it were, what would have been become of us before now. If grace had not been felt ſtronger than ſin, the weaker muſt have been abſolutely overcome by the ſtronger, and we have been carried away by it into all wickedneſs as before. I dare ſay you perceive this

Civicus. You have reaſon on your ſide, my *Evangeliſta,* and I feel comforted at the thought; and am very thankful for the benefit of this converſation.

Evan. I feel like pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Let us now ſing the following verſe and part for the preſent.

'Tis ſweet to converſe
On ſubjects divine,
When from the great Source,
Its beams on us ſhine,
To make converſation
Enliv'ning and clear;
It brings our ſalvation
(To feeling) more near.

Evan. Dear Civicus, adieu.

Civicus. Dear Evangeliſta, farewell.

THOUGHTS

ON THE

MILLENNIUM,

OR

Latter Day's Glory of the true Chriſtian Church.

REV. xvi. 6.

*And I ſaw another Angel fly in the midſt of Heaven, having the everlaſting Goſpel to preach to them that dwell upon the Earth, and to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People.**

THAT there is a very glorious period of goſpel light and proſperity, and of its univerſal ſpread and triumph, yet to come, is taught as clearly in the ſcriptures of truth as any other important doctrine therein contained; and among others, in the text and context now before us. True, the miniſters of Jeſus are commiſſioned by him to go into all the world and preach the goſpel to every creature, and many of the lively and zealous minded of the Redeemer's ambaſſadors have made very extenſive and laudable attempts; and by their labours the Lord has wrought much good in the earth; not only in the apoſtolic age, but ſince likewiſe. But I conceive that all that has yet been done, is but as the twilight of the riſing morning, compared with the meridian brightneſs of the clear noon-day. For, this *flying angel* which the apoſtle ſaw, is a ſeraphic goſpel miniſter, or a ſucceſſion of ſuch, remarkably and extraordinarily raiſed up, qualified, and ſent forth by the Lord himſelf, to preach

* Compare Chap. xi. 15 to 17, with Dan. vii. 26, 27, and Chap. xx. ii. to 7.

preach to *all people on earth*, after the pouring out the vials on the antichriſtian ſynagogue, and her ſupporters. That is, after God has ſhaken down every ſeparating wall and every injurious fence that hindered the progreſs of the preached goſpel. But this has never yet been done, though I am perſuaded that God is now doing it, and it is very likely, that theſe ſeraphic miniſters will ſpeedily receive this enlarged commiſſion, and go forth with the celerity of angelic minds, to preach to all the inhabitants of the earth, the everlaſting Goſpel of God our Saviour.

Divine veracity has pledged itſelf for the full accompliſhment of this, and this goſpel ſhall be preached to *every nation, kindred, and tongue*, its ſound ſhall be heard through all the earth, and the greateſt number of men ſhall feel its ſaving energy and life-giving power; for the Lord of Hoſts has ſpoken it. Therefore to call it in queſtion is a ſpecies of ſcepticiſm which every Chriſtian ſhould deteſt. Has God ſpoken it, and ſhall he not fulfil his word? Is any thing too hard for him? Will not his power perform what his truth has promiſed? Moſt aſſuredly it will. Then I would guard againſt ſcepticiſm on the one hand, and enthuſiaſm on the other; for if *enthuſiaſm* has *infected ſome*, I am afraid *ſcepticiſm* has *poiſoned more*. Laying aſide every imaginary conceit, I would take ſcripture for my guide; and in devout and pleaſing contemplation I would realize the long deſired arrival of the bleſſed and important period, when the ſound of the goſpel ſhall be heard through all the earth, and all fleſh ſee the ſalvation of our God. This, I am ſure, is no uncertain event, for the King of Glory has appointed that it ſhall actually take place in its proper ſeaſon, in the time beſt ſuited to manifeſt his infinite wiſdom, and enhance his goodneſs, and to ſecure to himſelf the whole revenue of praiſe.

True, the doctrine of the Millennium has been variouſly and contradictorily taught, and as variouſly believed. On this account many have doubted it, and others have rejected it altogether. But ſurely the well informed chriſtian is wiſer, for he knows there is not

not a doctrine in the ſcripture which has not been diſputed by many and rejected by others. Will any one ſay, that becauſe of this the ſcripture is *leſs true*, or any one of its doctrines *leſs important?* I am ſure no chriſtian will, whatever others do. The diſputes of men of corrupt minds, cannot invalidate or alter any iota of revealed truth. This obſervation will appoſitely apply here, and the ſcripture account of the Millennium be found a reality which cannot be ſhaken, let whoſoever will diſpute it: and the wilful rejecters of it, may many of them find it true to their coſt; for ſhould their unbelief foſter any oppoſition to the work of God when he is bringing it forward, they will be daſhed to pieces like a potter's veſſel. For the day that ſhall uſher in this moſt glorious æra will burn as an oven, and the wicked be as dry ſtubble before an all-devouring fire. Theſe then, ſhall find it true to their ſorrow. except they repent. But the children of God who have underſtood and believed it, will have to rejoice and be glad at its arrival: for now Jeſus will take to himſelf his mighty power, and ſubdue the nations to his government and reign over all, for he is *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*; and now he will ſend forth his word by his ſervants to *every* land. Thoſe who welcome the glad tidings to their hearts will live for ever; but thoſe who oppoſe and rebel will be deſtroyed. The Kingdom of Chriſt muſt come, and his will be done on earth as it is in heaven; or elſe, he has taught, and they have learnt to pray in vain; and all faith in it would be equally vain. But this cannot be, for he is the little Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, and his Church, who are the members of his body, ſhall ſoon become a great mountain and fill the *whole earth*, both with her *doctrine*, *diſciples*, *worſhip*, and *diſcipline*; for of theſe is his evangelical Kingdom compoſed. Therefore, our Lord will firſt make way for his evangeliſts to paſs, and then he will ſend them from land to land. The hindrances, whether men or things, he he will ſoon firſt remove by the pouring out of the vials of divine wrath, which this context predicts;

and theſe ſhall throw down and overturn whatever ſtands in his way; though to human power inſurmountable. yet to his own it ſhall inſtantly give way, as ſoon as he ſhall ſee good to exert it.

Theſe hindrances are ſtupid idolatrous Gentiliſm, on the one hand, and Antichriſtian deluſions and practices, on the other. Theſe are ſo deeply rooted in the minds of their deluded votaries, that nothing but the power of the Almighty, can pull up the one, or throw down the other: but till this is done there is not the leaſt human probability that the goſpel will ſpread, or men be enlightened, or the Kingdom of Chriſt come in that manner which the divine word has informed us it ſhall. Therefore, the judgments of the great God, as deſcribed in this chapter, will beat down and tear up the powers which ſupport theſe abominations, and take them out of the way. Then thoſe ſeraphic minds deſcribed by the appellation of *angels*, ſhall go forth preaching ſalvation to dying men of every nation, tribe and tongue. The power of the Lord will furniſh them for their work, and wonderfully crown their meſſages with vaſtly ſuperior ſucceſs, than any thing that has yet been known. The energy of the Divine Spirit will prepare the people, and make them ready to receive the word of the Lord; and though they will be but as the *Valley of dry Bones*, yet by the words of the angelic prophets being accompanied with divine energy, they will come together bone to its bone, and ſtand up a living army, and an innumerable company. For the word theſe miniſters ſhall deliver will be made effectual for theſe purpoſes, and to accompliſh all things for which it is ſent. Theſe are to enlighten and evangelize *the great maſs of mankind*, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, from ſin and ſatan to Chriſt, and to bring them by him to eternal felicity. For we are not taught to conceive of the redeemed of the Lord as a ſmall inconſiderable number, conſidered in the aggregate,* nor that the diſciples of Jeſus on earth will always be in the minority. No, for the angel in the

* Or, total ſum.

the words before us has a commiſſion to preach the goſpel to every nation, and to all men; and his ſucceſs will be as *large as his commiſſion.*

Perhaps this angel may ſignify either ſome ſuch remarkable individuals as a LUTHER, a CALVIN, or a WHITFIELD, or a ſucceſſion of ſuch; only with this difference, theſe will be armed with a greater degree of divine furniture and ardor, and crowned with more abundant ſucceſs than thoſe. For though they all carry the ſame meſſage to their fellow men, yet the qualification for the work, and the meaſure of ſucceſs which each miniſter ſhall have, depends on the divine will; and the work is effected by the energy of the Holy Ghoſt.

But the Lord's people are ſcattered all over the earth, eſpecially in the Millennial age: therefore all over the earth ſhall the goſpel be preached in purity and power; and the great majority in every land ſhall hear its ſound and feel its influence, and thereby be brought to know the Saviour and the way of ſalvation by him, and enjoy a knowledge of the forgiveneſs of ſins. But if the goſpel were not to be ſent to them, we know of no other way whereby to make them wiſe to ſalvation; for the apoſtle ſays, *faith cometh by hearing*, and hearing the goſpel preached faithfully to them: that is doubtleſs his meaning. Conſequently, this is another reaſon of a very concluſive nature why the goſpel ſound muſt be heard through all the earth, and the meſſengers of the Lord be ſent from land to land, and be crowned with all conceivable ſucceſs. For now, in this happy period, the King of Sion will ride forth in his evangelic car, conquering and to conquer. Now too, the arrows of divine conviction ſhall ſtick faſt in the hearts of the King's enemies, and make them fall before him, and become his humble ſuppliants, his willing diſciples, and his moſt affectionate friends. He bids his prophet tell us, that he intends to make them the moſt *delicious*, *ſoul-reviving*, and *all-animating* FEAST; a *Feaſt*, the moſt *coſtly* to its *Founder*, but *abſolutely free to every gueſt*; and he tells us too, that it ſhall be a feaſt to

all people. Certainly this cannot mean *a ſmall diminitive number,* nor *every individual of Adam's race*; but in the time when it ſhall be prepared, it ſhall be the *great maſs of men in every country*; *a vaſt number which no man can number,* from every part of the world.

I ſhall not notice the different ſentiments which have obtained on this ſubject, for the ſake of time and room, but directly ſtate that which appears to my mind to be revealed in the Word of God. For while we tread on this ground we ſhall ſtand firm, for the great Shepherd and Biſhop of ſouls has made it certain and ſacred; what we derive from thence will be from a pure fountain, and then the ſtream will be clear alſo. Therefore, the Scriptures ſhall be our *premiere* and *derniere reſort,* to theſe we make our firſt and laſt appeal; for from hence we may ſafely look for truth and certainty, and be able thereby to diſcern the true nature of the *Millennial Diſpenſation,* with its bleſſed effects and conſequences on the minds and bodies of men, the ſtate of the world, and the church of God. It will then be found in the largeſt ſenſe, that the entrance of divine truth into the minds of men giveth light, in a very extenſive manner, and of a moſt ſalutary kind indeed. So much ſo, that the dulleſt ſhall be well taught, and raiſe their hearts and voices to their Creator's high praiſes, and to every thing tending to honor and glorify their Saviour, make themſelves happy and ſpread felicity to all around.

For the further illuſtration of this truly delightful and pleaſing ſubject, I would attend regularly to the following principal points:

I. The Millennium* is a period in which pernicious ſentiment and deſtructive practice ſhall be done away, both from the minds and bodies of men.

II. The approach of this happy period is to be announced to the world by pouring out the vials of divine judgments on the enemies of Chriſt, and the oppoſers of his kingdom.

* From Mille, one thouſand, and Annorum, years; it ſignifies a thouſand years.

III. After theſe judgments are inflicted, it will be ſeen they were deſigned to remove worſe evils, and to introduce the moſt glorious part of the evangelic diſpenſation.

IV. This will be productive of the higheſt felicity both ſpiritual and terreſtrial that the church and world ever yet ſaw, which will ſhed genial rays of benign influence over all mankind.

V. The Millennium will be a period of long continuance.

Firſt. The Millennium is a period in which pernicious ſentiment and deſtructive practice ſhall be done away, both from the minds and bodies of men, for it is the glorious goſpel jubilee, and the ſabbatical year of the Lord. The mind of man in this glorious ſeaſon, will be delivered from theſe deluſions ſo fatal to human felicity, which the fall introduced at firſt, and which the prince of darkneſs has foſtered and propagated by means of men of corrupt minds, and the deſtructive errors they have imbibed and practiced. For now the all-irradiating light will ſhine, and men be enabled thereby to diſcover truth and detect error; now, more than ever, the Divine Spirit's influence will be poured from on high, and the night of *Gentiliſm*, *Papal Superſtition*, *Mahometan deluſion*, and every other *antichriſtian ſentiment* and practice will be chaſed before the bright ſhining of this moſt glorious light, as the ſhadows of the evening are before the approaching morning when the ſun begins to dart his rays.

Now the minds of men as well as their bodies are ſubject to that bondage of corruption which their ignorance and wickedneſs have ſo abundantly brought forth. The covering vail of human ignorance is caſt over the minds of natural men in all nations, and in conſequence of that, they are wrapped in worſe than Egyptian night. Nor is this darkening vail taken away from Chriſtendom itſelf; for though there are many of the children of light in it at preſent, as well as formerly, yet, alas! the baneful influence of the *Lo heres*, and the *Lo theres*, which ignorant party men,

men, and ſelf ſeeking prieſts have raiſed, there is too much reaſon to ſay, that the vail is not yet taken off from the viſible profeſſing chriſtian churches to this day. But at the arrival of this glorious goſpel jubilee and ſabbatic year of the Lord, this vail of the covering ſhall be taken away, *even* from off *all the Earth*;* this is the teſtimony of God himſelf by his prophet *Iſaiah*. It is certain this *glorious event* has never yet happened; for inſtead of being taken off all the earth, there are comparatively few who are not yet darkened by this deſtructive vail. There never was a time yet, in which theſe words have had their accompliſhment; conſequently, it is an event to be expected, and that on the ſureſt grounds, even the divine veracity and prediction, which the faithfulneſs of Deity is engaged to perform.

We are likewiſe aſſured that ALL ſhall know the Lord, and that the Spirit's influence ſhall be poured on *all fleſh*; that *the knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth as the waters do the ſea*. That Jeſus ſhall be King of *Nations*, as well as King of ſaints. That the kingdoms of this world ſhall become the kingdoms of our God and his Chriſt. That he ſhall reign over *all the earth even for ever and ever*; that is to the end of time: for the apoſtle Paul teaches us, that beyond the reſurrection of the dead, Chriſt ſhall reſign the reign of his mediatorial government to the Divine Father,† that he might be all in all. Therefore we may ſafely ſay, that the Millennium is an age of glorious light and heavenly influence, which ſhall chaſe the darkneſs of error away, with all its effects and conſequences on the minds of men and the ſtate of the world.

To the Church of Chriſt it will be the moſt welcome and moſt glorious period ſhe ever knew on earth. It is worth while to obſerve, that the reign of ignorance and error is compared to the darkneſs of the night, not only for the ſable hue of its ſhades, but for its univerſality and widely extended reign; for it wraps the whole hemiſphere in the darkneſs of its gloom,

* Iſa. xxv. 8. † I. Cor. xv. 24, 25.

gloom, and thereby lulls all things to ſilence and ſlumbers. On the contrary, this glorious diſpenſation is not only called the day, but we are told it ſhall be a day of *ſeven-fold light*; and more than that, in this glorious day the bride, the Lamb's wife ſhall be clothed with the ſun, have the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve ſtars on her head. By which the Holy Ghoſt ſignifies to us, that the pure knowledge of God, and the way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, ſhall be diſcerned as clearly, and known as fully as the eyes diſcern the objects which ſurround us, when the ſun ſhines moſt clearly, and no clouds appear. For as the rays of the ſun emit heat as well as light, and gild the creation with its glories, ſo the ſun of righteouſneſs not only ſpreads heavenly light abroad, but adorns and beautifies the mind with its various graces. This makes the happy partakers of theſe divine favours to underſtand fully what the prophets and apoſtles have recorded by divine direction; inſomuch that they are truly and emphatically called, the *children of light*. This furniſhes them for *every good word and work*, and enables them to ſhine to their Saviour's praiſe, and to adorn the doctrine of the great Redeemer in all things: this will be general in this happy time, and in a ſupereminent degree. Conſequently, the night of error muſt flee away, and the day of divine knowledge arrive, in glory more brilliant, and light more extenſive, than the moſt glorious day that the world ever yet ſaw, by as much as the light of ſeven ſuns would be more brilliant than that of one only.

"Oh! long expected day begin,
"Dawn on theſe realms of woe and ſin."

It muſt be ſo, for the King of Kings undertakes to do the work, and nothing can hinder its completion, for all muſt bow to his ſcepter, or be daſhed to pieces by his rod. Every ſoul muſt be ſubjected to his government; and every deſtructive practice as well as every pernicious ſentiment muſt give way to the reign of righteouſneſs, peace, and truth. Hurting and violence muſt be known no more, war and human carnage

carnage muſt ſink to the regions of darkneſs from whence they ſprung. For the Redeemer's maxim muſt become the univerſal law: *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them, for this is the law and the prophets.* The end of this commandment is love, out of a pure heart and friendſhip unfeigned. This friendſhip muſt be maintained by all our Lord's diſciples, and at this time they will be the great maſs of men, become his willing people. Conſequently, peace, friendſhip, and felicity will bleſs all the earth, and the curſe of the ground for the ſin of man will be happily and proportionably removed.

All this is evidently and plainly implied in the binding of ſatan and caſting him into the bottomleſs pit during the Millennium. But the binding of the helliſh lion is a certain event which will infallibly take place; and it will be to *all men*, ONE of the moſt intereſting and important of events: yea, it will be one of the moſt gracious acts of the Redeemer's power. For the grand miſchief-maker, who is now the prince of the power of the air, who rules in the children of diſobedience, will then be confined to the bottomleſs pit, and not ſuffered to go forth as now to deceive the nations, either by pernicious errors or deſtructive practices. The kingdom of hell muſt be completely overthrown, and the reign of King Jeſus univerſally ſet up. God ſays of the whole kingdom of darkneſs, with its members and appurtenances, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, till he come whoſe right it is, and I will give it him* Therefore the gentiliſm papiſtry, and every ſpeices of antichriſtianity which has deſolated the world and defiled the Church of Chriſt, muſt be ſwept away with the beſom of deſtruction, and the old ſerpent be permitted no longer to prowl through the creation, ſeeking whom he may devour; he ſhall be ſhut up in the abyſs of infernal deſpair. Then there will be no more hurting or deſtroying in all the holy mountain of our God: for then too, the whole earth ſhall be the temple of the Lord, and Jeſus ſhall reign from the rivers to the ends of the earth,

earth, and all nations ſubmit to his ſcepter. Satanic influence, and mental ſlavery ſhall be ſwept away; and pontifical und ſacerdotal domination be no more: the miniſters of religion will be of the primitive order; *Not lords over God's heritage, but helpers of his people's joy. Not teachers for filthy lucre's ſake,* but diſintereſted miniſters of Jeſus, who watch for ſouls as perſons who muſt give account to him who ſhall judge the quick and dead. For the Millennium will not put away the pure preaching of the word, nor render the goſpel miniſtry uſeleſs. Chriſt has already commiſſioned his own miniſters to *go and preach to all nations*; nor has he ever revoked that commiſſion, nor will he ever do ſo, for ſays he, *Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.* In the words I have ſelected, the angel has the *everlaſting goſpel to preach to every nation, kindred, and tongue*; and this angel ſignifies a heavenly minded miniſter or miniſters of Jeſus, who in the Millennium will go forth with aneglic ardor and ſeraphic celerity, to deliver their meſſages to their fellow men. Therefore, let us guard againſt thoſe enthuſiaſts who would ſet aſide *all preaching*, as much as againſt thoſe ſceptics who call all this in queſtion

But the miniſters of Jeſus never were, nor ever will they wiſh to be, ſetters up of *lords many*, over the faith and conſciences of their brethren; nor *gods many*, to invade the divine prerogative, but they are the ſtudious promoters of goſpel knowledge in its purity and power. This will cauſe men to know that Jeſus ONLY is *King in Zion, and head over all things to his Church*; *and they are all, without exception, Brethren*; and nothing above this in ſpiritual things; even thoſe whom divine influence inſpires with heavenly graces and miniſterial gifts, are not lords over God's heritage, but helpers of his people's joy. Even apoſtles themſelves claimed no higher pre-eminence, well knowing that they had no right to any higher pretenſions. Then it is clear, that real goſpel miniſters are only brethren in office, having no pre-eminence over the meaneſt chriſtian in all the ſchool of Chriſt; but as he

he may be bleſt with ſuperior gifts and graces, and thereby rendered more uſeful to the brethren in Chriſt and to men in general; and every man who is thus diſtinguiſhed by theſe gracious qualifications has a right to be a preacher of the word, wherever and whenever providence gives him an *open door.* Yea more than that, it is right for ſuch to ſeek opportunities to do good as far as they may; and wrong for them to ſleep on in a ſupine and negligent manner not caring whether men are ſaved or damned.

From all this it is natural to infer, that the ſentiment which would lead men to exalt ſelf and debaſe the Saviour, is in itſelf moſt pernicious and antichriſtian; and thoſe opinions which would lead men to create a pontifical or prieſtly lordſhip in the houſe of God; and that would inſpire the civil powers to repreſs and perſecute thoſe who cannot in conſcience agree to ſuch odious tenets, as well as thoſe abſurd and abominable notions that would lead carnal men to ſuppoſe that a courſe of human learning can give them a right to the chriſtian miniſtry, for the ſake of a genteel livelihood: and alſo, all thoſe notions which would lead men to ſin that grace may abound, or to do evil that good may come, are equally antichriſtian and pernicious: and all that conduct which theſe bad principles inſpire, muſt be abominable to God and equally injurious to men; and as long as theſe prevail, this world will continue to be a *ſort of acceldema, a field of blood,* of injuſtice and rapine. But the Kingdom of Chriſt is the oppoſite of all this; for it is a Kingdom of *righteouſneſs, peace,* and *purity*: and this Kingdom muſt come, and the Redeemer's will muſt be done on earth as it is in heaven. Therefore, every pernicious ſentiment and deſtructive practice muſt be rooted up and deſtroyed.

This is light which will ſpring up and ſpread abroad with every opening day; and in it men will be enabled to ſee where their trueſt intereſt lies, and how they may glorify God and enjoy him. This will alſo, more ſtrikingly than ever, impreſs every believer that the ſaints are all the children of the ſame heavenly

heavenly Father, loved by the ſame divine love, redeemed by the ſame precious blood, called by the ſame celeſtial grace, ſanctified by the ſame Holy Spirit's influence, partakers of the ſame faith, and deſtined to the ſame heaven; having one and the ſame hope of eternal life; and this will inſpire *them all* with the pureſt philanthropy or ſincere love to each other. This will be univerſal, and become productive of real felicity. For theſe divine principles will win their way and prevail, nor ſhall any oppoſition ſtop their progreſs or hinder their march, whether terreſtrial or infernal or both leagued together. Then men will compare ſpiritual things with ſpiritual, ſo will they diſcern the truth and cordially embrace it, and *detect error* and fly from it.

This is the native production of the reign of righteouſneſs, which ſhall now prevail without control; and the Millennium will be the ævum of ſpiritual felicity, civil friendſhip, and univerſal peace and love. But this leads me to our next obſervation,

II. To ſhew that the approach of this happy period is to be announced to the world by pouring out the vials of divine judgments on the enemies of Chriſt and the oppoſers of his Kingdom.* The ſcripture is very clear and expreſſive on this awful point; ſweeping judgments which will puniſh the wicked in general and remove many of them from the earth, are to be expected; and the Chriſtian may expect their arrival when the wicked triumph in their iniquities and think themſelves moſt ſecure; for the word of truth ſays, *When they ſay peace and ſafety, then ſudden deſtruction cometh.* The judgment which *Daniel* predicts chap. vii. is evidently the judgment of antichriſt in time, to make way for the Kingdom of God, and the dominion of his ſaints, that the goſpel may ſpread into all the earth! and not the judgment of all men at the end of time, as ſome have vainly enough imagined and

* For the proof of this, ſee Dan. vii. 26. 27.—Matt. xxiv. 21, to the end—Rev. chapters xvi. and xvii.

and asserted. But this judgment is the very same which St. *John* predicts shall fall on Babylon the Mother of Harlots, with all her sons and daughters; and it is designed *to tare up and cast down the Throne of antichrist*, with all her limbs and members, and every antichristian institution and practice. To rid the earth of the idolatrous and pernicious traffic with the souls and consciences of men, her abominable pollutions and murders, with all her hellish blasphemies and iniquities: the *Mother of Harlots* shall suffer the strokes of the Almighty till herself is destroyed, and her iniquities swept away. For these are so many, so abominable in their nature, so destructive in their tendency, and so extensive and universal that the earth is waxed old under her various abominations, and ready to sink beneath the dreadful pressure of their load. The whole earth travails and groans to be delivered from this intolerable burden; and in due time her renovation shall take place. This most wonderful change is so great in itself, and so mighty in its effects, that the divine word represents it by a new creation of heaven and earth. But, great as this wonderful renovation is, and notwithstanding every obstacle which earth and hell can throw in the way of its accomplishment, it SHALL take place. For, judgment will come upon the enemies of God to the uttermost; and the plagues of the Almighty be poured on the head and members of the antichristian synagogue: and there is great reason to believe her perdition is at the door. Indeed she is smitten for this same purpose, and the strokes God is now striking her with are the begun judgments which the prophet *Daniel*, and the apostle *John*, have predicted should come upon her.

Therefore, nothing can be more manifest than this, that the Millennium is to be announced to the world by the pouring out of the vials of divine wrath on the enemies of Christ and his gospel; and this makes the way for its universal spread. For it *tears up the Throne of Antichrist himself*, and *demolishes his empire*; but *sets up the Throne of* EMANUEL *and his* SAINTS. Then the wicked must lose their influence, and Jesus reign over all

all, and his Church ſhare with him in the glory of his Kingdom.

The conſequence will be, that all the wicked muſt turn or burn: *i. e.* they muſt bow to his ſceptre, or be broken to pieces by his rod. But God, who knows all things from eternity to eternity, gives us ſufficient reaſon to conclude, that a vaſt number of the adherents to the head and members of the grand apoſtacy from the pure primitive chriſtian faith, *never will repent; no not even when the heavieſt of temporal judgments come on them*: for even then, we are told they ſhall *gnaw their tongues for pain and anguiſh, and blaſpheme God yet the more.* Therefore, to bring in this moſt glorious æra of righteouſneſs, peace, and felicity, the judgments of God will conſume the man of ſin, with all his connections and dependencies. This may ſuffice to ſhew, the Millennium will be introduced by terrible judgments on the wicked, who continue the enemies of Chriſt and his goſpel.

I have hinted that ſeveral of the vials are already poured out, and that it is very likely the remainder will ſoon follow. Indeed I believe it will be found true: it appears to me that the *fifth* is now ſpending itſelf on the papal antichriſt, and that it will run out on him and entirely annihilate him and his dominion; and though for a moment, comparatively ſpeaking, his exiſtence may appear to be prolonged, yet it is but as it were for a moment; that the juſt vengeance of God may the more effectually fall on him, and his rejected adherents. They have loved to ſhed blood, and have ſpilled the blood of the beſt of men, with unexampled profuſion; I mean the blood of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus; now their day of reckoning arrives, and they muſt drink large draughts in return. Deſolation will now be poured on the deſolator, and his plagues become wonderful.

But it ſeems to me, that the *ſixth* vial will effect the ruin of Mahometan Antichriſt, and conſidering what has lately happened, and yet ſeems to be coming forward, one would think this vial had begun to be poured. Nor is this an impoſſible caſe, for indeed, all

all things conſidered, it appears moſt likely; and if ſo, the work will ſoon be finiſhed, which it was intended it ſhould accompliſh. But leſt any ſhould deceive themſelves with a miſtaken idea, that the Pope and Mahomet are the only Antichriſts, let us remind them here of what we have hinted before, that there are many others beſides theſe; let the following obſervations deſcribe them: every ſentiment and doctrine that oppoſes the goſpel of Chriſt, or any part of it, is antichriſtian: now the goſpel is a ſyſtem of grace, which debaſes the pride of man and lays it in the duſt, and exalts the Saviour in the higheſt. It recovers and ſaves the ſinner, but deſtroys his ſin; it makes men holy, generous, and happy. This is its native tendency to diffuſe light and ſolid peace and happineſs wherever it is cordially received; for it gives to God divine honors, and it reſtores men to a meaſure of that primitive purity and felicity which was enjoyed before the fall. I ſay, to a meaſure of it, and that meaſure is proportioned to the prevalence which theſe divine principles have on our hearts and lives. In a word, the goſpel of Chriſt teaches all who truly underſtand and believe it, to renounce ſin and ſelf, to truſt only in the Saviour for acceptance with God and eternal life, and to live in all holy obedience to his commands: and by theſe means to reſtore them to the favor and likeneſs of God. Such a ſyſtem as this, is certainly the moſt noble, godlike, and felicitating that can be conceived of; for it brings to God the higheſt honors, and to believing men the trueſt and moſt laſting felicity. In fine, it makes men eternally happy.

Now, to corrupt, deprave, oppoſe, or perſecute the goſpel or its profeſſors, is to be guilty of the vileſt and blackeſt of crimes; and it renders ſuch criminals ſuperlatively worthy of the heavieſt judgments of the Almighty. Such are really Antichriſts, or which is the ſame thing in other words, they are the enemies of God, and ſome of the worſt foes of their fellow men. Therefore, every doctrine which would ſet up an eccleſiaſtic headſhip and ſupremacy over the Church of Chriſt, and over the faith and conſciences of the people

people of God, beſides Chriſt's own authority, is to all intents and purpoſes antichriſtian. The placing the Redeemer's own ſupremacy in an individual, or in more than one two or ten, amounts to the ſame thing. God has ſet his King on his holy Hill, and there is no other lord of conſcience but him: He only is Head over all things to his Church. To invade his prerogative then, is the higheſt preſumption and the blackeſt blaſphemy,

But likewiſe, all that doctrine which exalts ſinful men and debaſes the Saviour, muſt be antichriſtian and abominable. That teaching which would lead men to be phariſaic on the one hand, or licentious on the other, cannot be of God, but is directly oppoſite to him; and conſequently, bears the image and ſuperſcription of antichriſt. Therefore, all that doctrine which in any wiſe contradicts, oppoſes, or explains away the plain and evident ſenſe of holy ſcripture, or ſets at naught any of the divine commands or inſtitutions, bears the ſame black mark. Likewiſe all that practice which promotes the ſin and miſery of men in any form, and ſpreads calamity and deſolation through the world in any manner, is marked with the ſame ſtigma, and branded with the ſame appellation by the God of truth.

Conſequently, the evil principles above referred to, and the deſtructive practices thence reſulting, being oppoſed to the divine honor and human happineſs, muſt and will be rooted up and ſwept from the earth. For God will ſet up the DISPENSATION of *purity, peace,* and *felicity,* which we are now contemplating *againſt all oppoſition*; and every adverſary thereto ſhall fall for its ſake.

Therefore, let all be admoniſhed to embrace the Saviour, to welcome the coming of his Kingdom, and to hail the bleſſed arrival of the Millennial Age in all its purity, felicity, and glory. And all the antichriſtian tribes particularly, may they have found repentance in due time, before the judgments of the Almighty take them away with a ſtroke, and fall on them to the uttermoſt. Let them be aſſured, that every impious

practice, and every pernicious principle, muſt give way to that more glorious diſpenſation of felicity and peace. May the Lord ſoon bleſs all men by its long deſired arrival. But this leads me to my

III. Principle point, which is to ſhew, that after theſe judgments are inflicted, it will be ſeen they were e ſigned to remove worſe evils, and to introduce the moſt glorious part of the evangelic diſpenſation.

The vials being poured out, particularly the *ſixth* and *ſeventh*, mentioned verſes 12 and 17, of chap xvi. from whence our motto is ſelected; it will then be announced from the Temple of Heaven, that the work of *awful judgment* IS DONE. *i. e.* the work which the infliction of the plagues on the enemies of Chriſt and his people, were deſigned to effect, is finiſhed. When the *ſeventh* vial is poured into the air, a terrible wind and earthquake will ſhake every veſtage of great Bable down, to riſe no more. Awful indeed, will her fall be, and the effects of it felt where it is now the leaſt expected. Where they are now ſaying peace and ſafety, they will then ſee *ſudden deſtruction come*; and bitter indeed will their lamentation be. But thoſe who will not be timely warned muſt be finally corrected, and take the conſequences; but *Moſes'* prayer is apropos here: *O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end.*

But the work of vindictive juſtice being finiſhed, and the awful puniſhment of the wicked paſt, the day of mercy will dawn. Then the ſtone cut out of the mountain without hands, ſhall fill the whole earth, and the Kingdom, and the greatneſs of the Kingdom, under the whole Heaven, ſhall be given to the people of the ſaints of the Moſt High, whoſe Kingdom is an everlaſting Kingdom, *and all Dominion ſhall ſerve and obey Him.*

Therefore, though the judgments which are coming on the antichriſtian world, are terrible and dreadful, yet they ſhall accompliſh the beſt of purpoſes, by a removal of the worſt of evils. For by taking away the miſchief makers the miſchief they have been doing will ceaſe, and the miſeries conſequent on it: for after the

the fountain is dried, the ſtreams will ceaſe to flow. But the miſery and ruin which the ſpirit, principles, and practices of the antichriſtian ſynagogue has brought on mankind, are infinitely greater than any puniſhment that can be inflicted on her in the preſent life. Therefore, though the judgment and puniſhment of antichriſt may laſt ſome conſiderable time, and be of a *ſevere and tremendous* nature; yet the *ruin and miſery* which *her deluſions occaſion*, are *infinitely* WORSE; for their evident tendency is to ENSLAVE *the bodies, and* DAMN *the ſouls* of men, and bring on them *preſent miſery*, and *future deſtruction*. The vials of divine vengeance then, will but remove *worſe evils*, and bring to mankind the ÆVUM *of purity, felicity, and peace*. This will be the moſt glorious part of the goſpel diſpenſation; for,

1. There will be a more glorious out-pouring of the divine influences than ever. The penticoſtal day was eminently glorious in this reſpect; but the goſpel jubliee will be ſuper-eminent. For the word of prophecy declares, that the ſpirit ſhall be poured out on *all fleſh*; and that ALL, in conſequence, *ſhall know the Lord*. Now, though I cannot conceive that every individual is meant by the word *all* here; yet, certainly it muſt mean the far greateſt number of mankind at that time. And I believe the really godly will be far more numerous at that time, than ever the wicked have been at any time; except we are to leave out the days of *Noah*, when the flood came. Therefore the Millennium will be the moſt glorious part of the goſpel diſpenſation, in that there will be a more abundant effuſion of the divine influences. The penticoſtal day was but an earneſt of this more glorious day of the Spirit's mighty power and wonderful works. For now the power of the Higheſt will convert, not only three thouſand at one time, and five thouſand at another, but we are told, *A nation ſhall be born in a day*. This moſt prolific regeneration is the production of the Divine Spirit's renovating power; for indeed this æra will emphatically be a *Diſpenſation of the Spirit*. But in the next place,

2. This

2. This happy period will be the moſt glorious, in that the number of converſions will be abundantly *more* than ever: the word of the Lord will not be preached nor heard in vain, or as it is now, with an awakening or two now and then; but there is every reaſon to believe, that *thouſands and tens of thouſands* will not only hear, but receive the word, from place to place, and from time to time.

But the word of prophecy foretells the re-call and replacing of God's ancient people, the Jews, in Judea, and their ſubſequent converſion to Jeſus our glorious Lord; and it appears to me, that before this moſt glorious work of converſion is to be expected, this wonderful event muſt take place. It appears to me, that the apoſtle *Paul* ſays as much in his epiſtle to the *Romans*, chap. xi. 15. *For if the caſting of them away be the reconciling of the world, what ſhall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.* Perhaps by the *reconciling* of the world in conſequence of the rejection of the Jews, may be mean,

1ſt. That a vaſt number of the Gentiles would be converted to the chriſtian faith, experience reconciliation with God through Jeſus Chriſt, and become the viſible church inſtead of the Jews; and we ſee to this day that this has actually been the caſe. But,

2dly. The rejection and diſperſion of the Jews, the demolition of their capital and temple, together with the deſtruction of their church and ſtate, was moſt evidently foretold, ſo plainly, that no attentive reader can miſtake either the predictions of the old teſtament, or the declarations of the new, on this head. The prophets of old, and our Lord himſelf had predicted it ſo ſtrongly, that if it had not taken place, there would have been ſerious objections to the truth of theſe prophecies: but the predictions have been confirmed by the event, and thereby perhaps thouſands were reconciled to the belief of theſe predictions, and to the chriſtian faith itſelf.

Now, their recall in the latter days, and their return to Judea: their re-incorporation as a nation and a body politic under the *King of Kings*, and their ſubſequent converſion

converſion to him, are as clearly and plainly foretold, both in the old teſtament and the new, as any thing can be; and *blind indeed* muſt that man be who cannot, or will not ſee it. Now, as their rejection of old was a reconciling the world, at leaſt many of the world to the chriſtian faith; their re-gathering and converſion will have *infinitely greater effect*; for, ſays the apoſtle, it ſhall be *life from the dead*. The valley of dry bones ſhall riſe from their dry, dead, ſcattered ſtate, and all unite bone to its bone, and become a living army; an army, miraculouſly raiſed from death and diſperſion, and reanimated, and reinvigorated, ſhall ſtand up as chief and principal in the ways of God, and become the firſt people on the face of the earth, both for piety and proſperity. When this is done, all the predictions relative to this wonderful people, will be ſo actually accompliſhed, that the rankeſt infidel that ever lived will be obliged to ſhut his mouth for ever, and forced to own, that there is a reality in the Bible Revelation, and that the prophets were men of God, who ſpoke the words of the Almighty, and were actually inſpired by him to fore-ſhew ſo clearly theſe wonderful events, for hundreds and thouſands of years before they took place. This will have a moſt enlivening effect on the world at large, and on the preſent viſible church in particular.

Now it will be evident, that God rules in the armies of heaven, and amongſt the children of men, and does in heaven and on earth whatſoever pleaſeth him. Now, antichriſtianity and infidelity will fly away like birds of the night, and Jew and Gentile embrace the Saviour, and the true chriſtian faith. Now too, after the Jews are conducted back to their own country and become a nation, the Deliverer ſhall come out of Zion and turn away ungodlineſs from Jacob. Now the Temple of Heaven will be opened at Jeruſalem, and the word of the Lord proceed from thence to all around. *Iſaiah* ſays, *Out of Zion ſhall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jeruſalem.* *Micah* repeats the words, and both of them tell us, this ſhall be *after* men have beaten *their ſwords into plough-ſhares*

ſhares and their ſpears into pruning-hooks; and the nations have learned to ceaſe from war. Conſequently, it is yet to come, and will I think, ſoon be fulfilled; how ſoon I will not ſay, for I know not, but I think it will not be very long firſt. Now when all this has taken place, converſion to chriſtianity will be rapid indeed. Millions will be flocking to hear the word, and join in the worſhip of God, and enquiring the way to Zion with their faces thither-ward. In this alſo, the Millennium will exceed in glory all the former diſpenſations, for it will produce a larger progeny of ſpiritual children, both of Jews and Gentiles, than all the revivals which have ever preceded it, *perhaps ten thouſand fold.* But in the next place,

3. The Millennium will be the moſt glorious part of the goſpel diſpenſation, for that ſin will be more than ever ſuppreſſed and ſubdued, and holineſs more than ever promoted. Then God will put his fear in the hearts of men, and write his law there, and his loving-kindneſs will conſtrain them to forſake iniquity and live to his glory. Then deteſted ſwearing will ceaſe, and the ears of the pious no more be wounded by horrible oaths and curſes, and the dreadful imprecations of the profane and flagitious; nor truth be falſified by the impious liar; nor the charity which hopeth all things, be impoſed on by the deceit of the hypocrite; nor impurity be permitted to defile the body and damn the ſoul of man; nor any other abomination which the deceit and wickedneſs of the human heart, or the infernal policy of the grand deſtroyer can invent, will be ſuffered to prevail. For the faith of men will be pure and genuine, and then the good fruits muſt follow, as the native and neceſſary conſequence; for all who underſtand and believe the goſpel *now*, know well, that faith works by love, and purifies the heart: then, the heart being purified by grace, the life will be to the praiſe of him who is the truth and the life. The heart being turned heaven-ward there will be genuine love to God and holineſs, and a forſaking of all iniquity. But,

4. In this moſt felicitating æra, hurting and deſtroying

ſtroying will be done away, and the ſyſtem of human butchery be ſuffered to exiſt no longer. The implements of human deſtruction and carnage will be converted to more benevolent and friendly purpoſes, namely, to the cultivation of the earth in a much more enlarged and productive manner than at preſent; and the more advantageous proſecution of uſeful arts, ſciences, and manufactures. For whenever the goſpel is fully and generally underſtood and believed, men will reſpect the authority of the *divine legiſlator*, and chearfully ſubmit to his laws; then will they leave the abominable art and practice of deſtruction to the great deſtroyer, and liſten to the mild, gentle, and generous commands of the beſt friend of man; who ſays, *All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you, do ye even ſo to them, for this is the law and the prophets.* This will then be the great governing principle of general action, which will influence the whole body of human ſociety; it will become their *premiere* and *derniere* reſort. For this will be the age of univerſal peace and love. Harmony among men will then be enjoyed, and the ſongs of the heavenly hoſts at the Redeemer's nativity, will be fully realized: viz. *Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, good will towards men.* It muſt be ſo, for now the reign of the Prince of Darkneſs will be completely overthrown, and himſelf confined to the abyſs; and the reign of the Prince of Peace in men's hearts, will make their lives harmleſs, their hearts tender, and their ſouls truly to love each other; for then they will have learnt as the elect of God, holy and beloved, to put on bowels of mercies, and this will lead them to univerſal affection and good will. But in the next place,

5. This will be the Ævum of the grand regeneration, called a new creation of heaven and earth. By which expreſſions, I cannot conceive to be meant a literal re-creation of the viſible heavens or the earth; but by the earth I ſuppoſe the ſtate of the world is meant; and by the heaven the ſtate of the Church of God. Now, when we are told by the prophets in the old teſtament, and the apoſtles in the new, that God will

will make new heavens and a new earth; I underſtand a grand renovation and reſtoration to purity and rectitude; truth and holineſs will prevail in the church, and juſtice and equity in every department of civil ſociety. Now, whatever is wrong will be put away, and whatever is right, juſt, and conſiſtent with the love of God and our neighbour, will be vaſtly better attended to. This will have ſuch a happy tendency, and be productive of ſuch beneficial effects, that the general condition of men will be ſo much altered for the better, that it will reſemble *a new creation.* For now the divine influences from on high will ſo wonderfully illuminate the minds of men, that they will diſcover what is wrong, and rectify it; is it ſin within them? they will hate and forſake it. Is it ſin round about them? they will reprove and correct it, and it will flee before them. *Is there any thing highly eſteemed among men at preſent, which is an abomination in the ſight of God?* There *are aſſuredly many things of this deſcription,* but now divine light will diſcover it, and divine grace will influence men to deteſt and abhor it, and to flee from it; and every thing of this nature will be done away. Then men will diſcern what is right, and chearfully adopt it; and if there is found any pernicious domination, it will be done away, whether it be civil or eccleſiaſtical. We ſay NOT *that juſt government will be deſtroyed,* NO, *nothing can be farther from our thoughts*; nor ſhall I go about to diſcuſs any particular ſyſtem of politics, I leave that to others. This, however, I will venture to affirm, that truly enlightened men will readily adopt the beſt methods to ſecure *general happineſs,* and to do the *greateſt good with the leaſt expence,* to render the great body of ſociety as comfortable as poſſible, *not to aggrandize the few, and ſtarve the many*; but to render to ALL the means of *comforable ſupport.*

The Millennium will be productive of this. For men in this time will be univerſally pious and chriſtian, and their conſtant aim and end will be the honor and glory of God, and the univerſal good of their fellow men.

This

This grand regeneration will be ſo great in its nature and ſo happy in its effects, that it will exhibit a change ſo vaſtly for the beſt, that it will ſeem as if the *Garden of Eden* was become a *paradifical world*, and the *whole earth made up of it*. For this reaſon, I conceive it is, that the ſcripture calls it a new creation of heaven and earth. It is a renovation of men and meaſures, and it will be begun and carried on by the power of God. Should any oppoſe his work, or attempt to hinder his eſtabliſhment of righteouſneſs and true felicity, they will be daſhed in pieces as a potter's veſſel; for God will do all his pleaſure.

The civil and religious hemiſpheres will be adorned with luminaries at once proper in kind, and every way ſalutary in operation: deſtructive meteors muſt diſapear, and luminaries of *celeſtial origin* will occupy their places; from them will be emitted pure light to chear the mind, and genial heat to animate and invigorate the powers, and divine influence to give to the whole a heavenly direction and tendency. In a word, the Kingdom of Heaven will be ſet up on earth, *The Tabernacle of God will be with men*; and the Lord of Heaven will dwell among them. All this, and much more, is implied in the following ſcriptures:—*Iſa.* ii. 2, 3, 4, 5. —lx. 19, 20—lxv. 17 to the end; compared with *Dan.* vii. 26, to the end.—*Rev.* xx. 4 to 7. And many others, too numerous to be quoted here.

IV. That this will be productive of the higheſt felicity, both ſpiritual and temporal, that the church and world ever yet ſaw; for it will ſhed its benign influence all over the earth. We are expreſsly told, that *God will take the vail of the covering from off* ALL NATIONS, *and from* ALL PEOPLE, *and that all fleſh ſhall ſee his ſalvation.* Therefore, the Millennium will be productive of the *temporal* and *ſpiritual* felicity of men, beyond any thing yet known on earth. For,

1. God will then be more abundantly known than hitherto; and this knowledge will be of a right kind, of a ſpiritual and influential nature. God will be known in his love and grace, and enjoyed in the hearts of his children, more generally and abundantly than ever.

For now truth will ſhine forth in all its luſtre, and men will underſtand and be reconciled to it; and this will be productive of joy and peace in believing. For now too, the light of the goſpel ſun will become *ſeven-fold*;* this is evidently taught by the Apoſtle in his epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, chap. viii. 11. *They ſhall not teach every man his brother, and every man his neighbour, ſaying, Know the Lord: for all ſhall know him, from the greateſt to the leaſt.* This ſhews us, that the knowledge of God will be vaſtly more abundant than ever, in conſequence of the inward, powerful, and efficacious teaching of the Divine Spirit with the word. Now, alas! ignorance and ſin abounds every where; but then, *The knowledge of the Lord ſhall cover the earth as the waters do the ſea*, and this bleſt intelligence become more general and extenſive than the reign of ignorance and ſin at preſent. For,

2. Now the gracious preſence of God with his people will be more intimately nigh, and more delightfully felt than it hath hitherto generally been; and the joy of the Lord will be ſuper-eminently their ſtrength and ſong. By which their pleaſure and peace in believing will be ſo enlarged as has been but rarely enjoyed in the chriſtian church yet. But the prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaking of this time, ſays; *Thy ſun ſhall no more go down, neither ſhall thy moon withdraw itſelf, for the Lord ſhall be thine everlaſting light, and the days of thy mourning ſhall be ended.* See, chap. lx. verſe 20. This ſhews us, that God will then be better known, and more abundantly enjoyed than ever; for he will manifeſt himſelf more fully, clearly, and intimately than heretofore, and this will render this happy age moſt glorious.

3. The heavenly world and its everlaſting glories will become more abundantly realized; for the Tabernacle of God will be eminently with men, and the realities of the inviſible ſtate become more clearly and evidently diſcerned by good men, than ever it has been in general yet. This will increaſe the felicity of

* Iſaiah, xxx. 26.

of thoſe happy times beyond any thing I am able to expreſs at preſent. The ſabbath and divine worſhip will be as the opening of the heavenly ſtate, and the ſongs of the ſanctuary, a foretaſte of the heavenly employments of the celeſtial inhabitants; and the preached word will be as the Eternal ſpeaking to men through that medium; and that not as at preſent, to a few, but to the great maſs of goſpel hearers. But,

4. This will be productive of the higheſt temporal felicity; for the grand adverſary being bound in the depth of his infernal den, and the diabolical tempers and diſpoſitions of men happily ſubdued by divine grace; the neceſſary reſult will be, that the world will be huſhed to peace in the enlarged enjoyment of the bleſſed God, and his abundant bleſſing on the earth and its productions. Then peace and plenty will bleſs the great family of men; ſcarcity, dearth, and famine will be known no more, nor the miſeries reſulting from them, for the cauſes will be removed, and the effects muſt ceaſe. War and rapine will ceaſe to devour, and the fruits of the earth be preſerved for the kindly and comfortable uſe of all. The curſe of barreneſs for man's ſin will be removed, and the earth become ſuper-eminently fruitful and productive of every neceſſary and every comfort. Indeed the goſpel of Jeſus hath this native and neceſſary tendency, for it is the pure river of water of life, which makes every thing live where its healing waters flow. Becauſe it is the wiſdom of Deity, which when it enters in, and takes up its abode in the ſoul of man, it renders him apt and ready to every good word and work, both perſonal, relative, and ſocial. Therefore, it is friendly to every uſeful art and ſcience, and in theſe days they will be carried to greater perfection than ever, and this will wonderfully tend to better the ſtate of civil ſociety at large, and to render the Church of God more happy and glorious than ever before. Fraudulent monopoly will then find no place among mortals, and graſping ſpeculation will be done away, for men will then become generally juſt; this will put the good things of this life within the reach of all, and baniſh diſtreſſing poverty from the face of the earth. But,

5. A vaſt variety of diſeaſes and afflictions will conſequently be removed, and the body of man partake of the felicity of the mind, and the Millennium will be productive of health and long life. It is a truth known to all, in a greater degree or a leſs, that bodily wants, worldly diſappointments, and daily preſſing neceſſities, have hitherto attacked the great maſs of men, and at ſome ſeaſons more than others. This is a fact which none will diſpute but thoſe who will not ſee the light.

From this awfully prolific ſource have flowed many mortal diſeaſes, for it has the greateſt tendency to produce them: theſe ſhorten human exiſtence on earth, and render life uncomfortable while it is granted. But in this happy æra, the divine bleſſing will remove theſe cauſes, and health, happineſs, and long life be proportionably enjoyed, as the effect of that removal. The words of *Iſaiah* chap. xxv. 6, 7, 8. will then be literally as well as ſpiritually fulfilled: *In this Mountain ſhall the Lord of Hoſts make unto* ALL PEOPLE, *a feaſt of fat things, a feaſt of wine on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined: and he will deſtroy in this mountain the face of the covering caſt over* ALL PEOPLE, *and the vail that is ſpread over* ALL NATIONS; *he will ſwallow up death in victory; and the Lord ſhall wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people ſhall he take away* FROM OFF ALL THE EARTH, *for the Lord hath ſpoken it.* Theſe words promiſe to believing Jews and Gentiles a rich abundance of ſpiritual proviſion, and of temporal good.

Of ſpiritual proviſion; theſe are, the goſpel itſelf, with all its benefits and bleſſings brought home to the mind with powerful energy and ſaving illumination; this reveals to the happy partakers of it, their intereſt in eternal love, their redemption by infinitely precious blood, their effectual calling, their free and full pardon, their complete juſtification, and their certain deſtiny to eternal life. This removes the ignorance of the mind, ſaid to be a vail caſt over the face of all people, and ſlays the unbelief and enmity of the ſpirit, and

makes the ſoul truly happy in the love of God. This is felicity which the moſt delicious of all earthly things can never produce, for it is mental and celeſtial pleaſure, which heaven-born minds alone can enjoy. But theſe bleſſings ſhall become general, for the great body of men ſhall be of this character, and partake of theſe bleſſings.

The temporal bleſſings here promiſed, are ſignified by the wiping tears away: *i. e.* the cauſes of ſorrow; particularly, every ſpecies of perſecution and proſcription, which impious eccleſiaſtics and baſe tyrants have deviſed againſt thoſe who diſſent from them; together with preſſing poverty and diſtreſſing want. The reign of holineſs and righteouſneſs will be productive of this, and the bleſſing of the Almighty will make the earth moſt abundant in its productions, and render the means of comfort and ſupport fully within the reach of every induſtrious hand; and health, happineſs and long life will be the certain and neceſſary reſult of this. But this brings me to my laſt principal point,

V. To ſhew that this happy period will be of very long duration. This will appear from the terms made uſe of in ſcripture to deſcribe it. *Iſaiah* calls it, THE EVERLASTING LIGHT. *Daniel* calls it, FOR EVER AND EVER. St. *John* calls it, A THOUSAND YEARS. All which ſignifies a long duration, not terminable by a few months, years, or centuries, but of many hundreds, perhaps thouſands of years continuance. It is the glory and fulneſs of the Redeemer's Kingdom, which ſhall not be as the fading Kingdoms of the earth, for it ſhall extend over all, and it is called, *an everlaſting Dominion.* Jeſus is *the Father of the Everlaſting Age*, and this Everlaſting Age is the time in which univerſal government ſhall be on his ſhoulders, to order it and to eſtabliſh it with juſtice and judgment, and to rule as the prince of peace. He is the King of Zion, and his reign ſhall extend over all nations, and over all people of every language, tribe, and climate, and they ſhall all ſerve and obey him. This is the teſtimony of the ſcriptures of truth. Conſequently, this ſervice is

to be paid to him on earth, for heaven admits not of a diverſity of languages, nor is it parcelled out into divers countries and nations. Then the nations are the nations of the earth, and the time predicted is the Millennium.

The world of glory, no doubt, has one univerſal language, which is perfectly underſtood by all the happy inhabitants.

But I would take more particular notice here of the words of St. *John, Rev.* xx. 6. He ſays, *The Saints ſhall reign with Chriſt a Thouſand Years.* It is very remarkable that *Days* and *Years* are figuratively uſed both in *Daniel* and the *Revelation*, and other parts of ſcripture. The 42 months, 1260 days, the time, times and half a time,* are evidently ſo uſed, and deſigned to mean years inſtead of days; events prove this beyond a doubt; for the 1260 years are the time which God in juſt judgment, as an awful ſcourge for the crimes of men, has permitted the beaſt, dragon, and falſe prophet to plague the world and ſcourge the church, and to drink the blood of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, and to fill the earth with miſery; but beyond that they ſhall reign no longer; and at the expiration of that time, their fall ſhall come, and none ſhall be able to help them.

But, theſe years are prophetic time, and ſo to be calculated, and the numbers explain each other, and evidently ſhew, that they are to be calculated prophetically. The prophetic year is calculated thus: 30 days in each month, and 12 months in the year,† making juſt 360 days in the ſame; and the 1260 days are ſo many years, after this reckoning, they make of our time about 1242 ½ years. Now, it is eaſy to prove, that papiſtry, in ſome or all of its deſtructive forms, has reigned and proſpered for nearly the above number of years. Thus, the event proves, that years are meant. That it is prophetic time which theſe dates ſignify, I prove thus:

1. Multiply

* Rev. xi. 2, 3,—xii. 12.—Dan. vii. 25,—viii. 14.

† Fleming's Apocalyptical Key, pages 19 to 22.

1. Multiply the 42 months by the days of one month.

Days,	30
Produce,	1260

This ſhews that that the 42 months are the ſame length of time as the 1260 days, or years, and that the months conſiſt of 30 days each, and no more or leſs.

2. Add together time, times, and an half.

A time is one year, or		360 days.
Times	two ditto, or	720 ditto.
Half a time,	or	180 ditto.
Make a total as before; of		1260

To my mind this is ſufficiently clear. Now, the word of prophecy ſhews plainly, that 1260 of theſe years, are the time which Jehovah has in righteous judgment, and as a terrible ſcourge for the crimes of ungodly men, and the iniquity of falſe profeſſors, permitted papiſtry to riſe and proſper. But this time ſeems to be up, or nearly ſo; and the proſperity of the Romiſh Synagogue is come to an end. Conſequently, ſome of the Ten Horns begin to hate the Whore, to make her deſolate and naked, to eat her fleſh, and they will e'er long burn her with fire.

Several very judicious writers tell us, that the anti-chriſtianity of Rome began to be propagated by the ſword, as early as 529, or 534,* when the Emperor *Juſtinian* publiſhed his bloody Code of Church Laws, which made it confiſcation and death to diſſent from popiſh religion. Another account† points us to A. D. 552, as an æra of the Pope's further aggrandiſement.——take 552

add to it 1242 ½

1794 ½

* Bicheno's Appendix, page 203.

† Fleming's Apocalyptical Key, p. 24, compared with p. 53.

Every one knows, that by this time here pointed out, and ſince alſo, the popiſh church, and the popedom itſelf has been more ſeverely attacked and humbled than ever before. Nor is the preſent pope's proſpect very promiſſing. The probability is, that it is nearly arrived at the end of its deſtination, and that its final demolition cannot be far diſtant. But, let us leave the event with God, to whom it is perfectly known, and mark at the ſame time the ſigns of the times, and from them we may gather, that the day draws nigh which we now contemplate. For the fall of the falſe church will be followed with the riſe and proſperity of the true.

We have ſeen that the 42 months, 1260 days, &c. are uſed figuratively for years; and there are ſome writers who are certainly worthy of notice, at leaſt, who ſuppoſe that the *thouſand years*, in *Rev.* xx. are uſed in the ſame figurative manner, and that each year means 360 prophetic years, and the whole 360,000 ſuch years.* I will not be over poſitive for or againſt it; but the following reaſons incline my mind to think there may be ſome truth in it.

1. There are an infinite number which NO MAN *can number, choſen to eternal life in Chriſt Jeſus, and redeemed by his moſt precious blood.* Therefore, they muſt all be brought into exiſtence, and in due time converted by divine grace, and made children of God by adoption. But an infinite number which NO MAN *can number* would not ſucceed each other in the ſcale of human exiſtence, either in ſeven thouſand or ſeventy times ſeven as many, for an ordinary arithmetician may eaſily calculate how many the whole ſum of births would amount to in 77,000 years at the rate of 800,000,000 each ſecond of time, for all that or a longer given period than that. Therefore, it is moſt likely that the Millennium will be vaſtly longer than a literal thouſand years of any calculation whatever For it is evident, that the ſaved among adults, or the grown up, have hitherto been vaſtly in the minority. But,

† Illuſtration of Prophecy, p. 639, and ſeveral Authors there quoted.

2. I think it is pretty evident, that the earth is not capable of ſuſtaining a number large enough at any given time to render *the whole an infinite number*, either in 7000, or 77000, or a much larger time than that. Therefore a *much larger term than a thouſand years with an increaſed population*, will be abſolutely neceſſary for the continuance of this happy age, in order to fulfil all that is prophecied ſhall be done in it. For, beſides the being brought into exiſtence, the people of God will have generation work to do, and much to perform for the *bettering the ſtate of civil ſociety* and the good of the church of God. Therefore they muſt live long and proſper.

3. The redeemed of the Lord are choſen from among every generation of men from the creation to the end of time, and not a ſingle individual of them ſhall be loſt. Therefore, to fulfil the Father's purpoſe, to reward the Son's finiſhed work, and to magnify the Divine Spirit's agency and influence, they muſt all be brought by grace to glory. But in order to this, they muſt ſucceed each other in a long ſucceſſion of generations, or otherwiſe, they will not be an incalculable ſum when they are all gathered together at laſt; but they are a number which none but Deity can calculate. Therefore, it is moſt likely, that the Millennium is a term vaſtly larger than is generally allowed.

But I ſhall now juſt notice what may be judged the moſt prominent ſigns of the ſpeedy approach of theſe days. And the firſt that ſtrikes me is, that the judgments which ſhall throw down and demoliſh every antichriſtian inſtitution and practice, and announce the ſpeedy ſetting up of the Kingdom of God, *are begun.—The judgment is begun*, and the work will go forward; it is a *ſhort*, but a MOST EFFECTUAL WORK which the Judge of all will do on the earth, and by it he will completely overturn whatever ſtands in his way. Therefore, I think the day of the Redeemer's glorious power is very near at hand.

The European World has been viſited with dreadful ſcourges already; and my reader need not wonder if many more come after. Theſe ſtrokes have been inflicted

inflicted on the Man of Sin and his ſupporters chiefly. and by comparing events with bible prophecies, I am led to believe, his 1260 years of proſperity are at an end, and that he will continue to decline till he is taken out of the way. This is a very prominent ſign of theſe times, indeed.

But, the 6th vial ſeems to be pouring on the *Turkiſh Antichriſt*, and it is likely that the final fall of both theſe, will neither be far apart, nor far diſtant. And, when this is effected, wonders on wonders will open on the world.—One of which will be, the re-call of the Jews to their own land, and their re-eſtabliſhment there in peace and proſperity, as already obſerved. When this happens, there will be one of the moſt confirming proofs of the truth, veracity, and reality of divine prophecy, that ever the world ſaw. The divine inſpiration of ſcripture will then ſhine more gloriouſly than ever; and the chriſtian faith be more confirmed and eſtabliſhed in the ſouls of men than ever. Infidelity will be torne up root and branch, and not a ſprout of it any more be ſuffered to ſpring. If I am not miſtaken, the 6th vial has begun to pour forth its contents on the eaſtern Antichriſt already, and if ſo, his time is but ſhort. I ſhall expect to ſee the reſurrection of the valley of dry bones ſpeedily follow, and that will be as life from the dead, to the world at large, except to thoſe who ſhall be mad enough to oppoſe their return. To ſuch it will prove *certain and inevitable* DESTRUCTION, *however many or mighty ſuch oppoſers may be.* Let the example of *Pharoah* and his hoſt of old, convince all men of this. For as their re-call from Egypt of old, by divine appointment, the inſtrumentality of Moſes and Aaron was made uſe of to overcome all oppoſition, and to effect that for which it was appointed: ſo now, when God fulfils this part of his moſt wonderful deſign, it is to me more than probable, that their reſtoration will be conducted by ſimilar inſtruments; and *nothing will be permitted to ſtand before them, either to ſtop their march or hinder their progreſs.* Or, if for a moment they ſhould be impeded, their march will be the ſwifter

ſwifter afterward. For thoſe whom the Lord clothes with ſtrength, are ſtrong indeed, for nothing can overcome them. And, as the law was given of old with a moſt aſtoniſhing diſplay of divine power and glory on the mount, ſo now, I think, there will be a moſt reſplendent diſplay of Chriſt's perſonal glories, and his goſpel be announced to the Jews by the perſonal appearance of the Son of God. *For they ſhall look on him whom they have pierced and mourn.* He can make himſelf viſible if he chuſes, and if he ſees good to do ſo, there can be no hindrance in his way. Beſides, our Lord implies that they ſhall SEE HIM, when they ſay, *Bleſſed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord.* They had the ſymbol of the divine preſence when travelling from Egypt to Canaan, in the cloud and pillar, and afterward in the Shekinah in the Temple; at the opening of which, God made an overwhelming diſplay of his glory; and when the Temple at Jeruſalem ſhall be re-erected for chriſtian worſhip, no doubt but the bleſſed Jeſus will make a moſt grand diſplay of his divine power; or, manifeſt his perſonal glories; or, perhaps both. Then Jew and Gentile will ſubmit to his government, and he become the Lord of all.

From all which I infer, that though the *grown up* have hitherto, for the moſt part, lived and died among the wicked, yet the time will ſoon come when they ſhall turn to God, and remain the great majority of men for many centuries. So that at the *Laſt Day* it will be proved, that the greateſt part of mankind will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo they ſhall be for ever with the Lord.

ERRATA.

Page 3. line 8 from top, for *diſpiſing* read *deſpiſing*.
Page 11. line 18 from bottom for *numbleſs* read *numberleſs*.
Page 12. 5th Obſervation, after *who*, inſert *can*.
Page 18. line 8 from bottom, for *man* read *men*.
Page 19. line 12, for *moſt* read *muſt*.
Page 36. line 9, for *light* read *ſight*.
Page 43. in 2nd. reply by Civicus, line 1, for *thing*, read *think*.
Page 51. line 10, for *powed* read *power*.
Page 53. ver. laſt, for *my* read *may*.
Page 86. line 15 from bottom, for *undervived* read *underived*.
Page 89. line 7, for *creature* read *Creator*.
Page 102. line 3 from bottom, for *your* read *you*.
Page 122. line 9, for *ſun-gem* read *ſun-beam*.
Page 124. line 10 from bottom, after *virgin* inſert *is*.
Page 139. line 6, after *number* inſert *of*.
Page 119. line 9, for *intercepted* read *interpoſed*.

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Briſtol: Printed by Biggs & Cottle, St. Auguſtine's-Back.